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VOL XI SUPPRESSION OF THE REBELLION IN THE
NORTH WEST TERRITORIES OF CANADA, 1885.
By GENERAL SIR FRED MIDDLETON, Edited, with
Introduction, By G. H. NEEDLER.

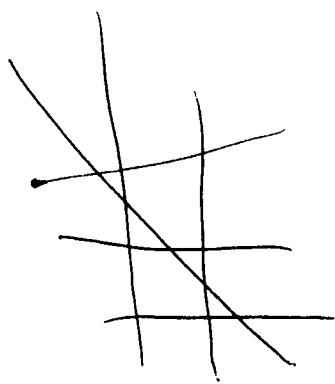
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PREFACE

I HAVE been asked by the University of Toronto Press to write a brief biographical note on Major G. H. Needler, editor of General Middleton's account of the North West Rebellion, 1885. Neither in his introduction, nor in his critical and explanatory notes has the editor permitted himself to mention the fact that he himself was a member of the North West Field Force. Readers of the volume should at least know that among Major Needler's qualifications for his task are not only his keen intelligence and interest in military operations, but also his experience throughout the campaign as a corporal in the Queen's Own Regiment.

George Henry Needler was born in Millbank, Ontario, in 1866, and in September, 1882 enrolled in University College, the University of Toronto. At once he joined K Company (the University Company) of the Queen's Own, and remained a member throughout the four years of his undergraduate course. On the outbreak of the North West Rebellion he volunteered for active service, and his nineteenth birthday (March 28, 1885) found him no longer a student but a soldier about to take his part in actual warfare. He served throughout the short campaign, and experienced his full share of hardship and danger.

After graduating from the university in June, 1886 Mr. Needler proceeded to Germany for several years of work in modern languages, and in 1891 he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Leipzig University. He was immediately appointed lecturer in German in University College and remained a member of its staff for forty-five years during a great part of which he was head of the department. When the Canadian Officers' Training Corps was reorganized in 1914 he was appointed captain of A Company. In 1916 at the instance of General Gwatkin, chief of the General Staff, the Overseas Training Company of the C.O.T.C. was authorized to furnish young officer recruits for the imperial forces, and Captain Needler was appointed commanding officer. He was soon appointed to the rank of major, and remained in command of the unit for three years until it was demobilized in March, 1919.

Since his retirement from the University staff in 1936, Major Needler has been busily occupied with research work in literature and Canadian history. Among his publications are his verse translation of the *Niebelungenlied*, the *Letters of Anna Jameson to Ottilie von Goethe*, and *The Lone Shieling*, and he has become the chief authority on the life and works of John Galt. At the mature age of eighty-two he shows no slackening of his enthusiasm for research, and one would judge from his physical appearance that he might even yet undertake one of the long route marches of which he knew so much in earlier days.

MALCOLM W. WALLACE

The University of Toronto.

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INTRODUCTION

THE official record of the campaign of 1885 in the Canadian North-West is preserved in the *Report upon the Suppression of the Rebellion in the North-West Territories and Matters in Connection Therewith, in 1885*, which was presented to Parliament by the Department of Militia and Defence in May, 1886. This *Report*, which contains the despatches of Major General Middleton and his subordinate officers regarding the military operations, as well as returns from the heads of the auxiliary services, is the source to which we must go for the primary historical facts.

The story of the campaign as a whole would, however, remain incomplete unless augmented by the first-hand accounts published later by several of the participants regarding operations for which they were immediately responsible, or events that came directly under their notice, notably those of Major General Strange, Major Boulton, and Lieutenant Colonel Denison. Among these later unofficial accounts of the campaign is that by the General Officer Commanding, Major General Middleton himself, who in 1885 was in command of the Canadian militia and directing chief of all the forces called out. This account appeared in London, England, in four successive issues of the *United Service Magazine* (November and December, 1893, and January and February, 1894). It is substantially a retelling of his despatches to the minister of militia at the time. But in it Middleton, after a lapse of eight years, is taking a more leisurely survey of the stirring events that then engrossed him, and writing a more connected narrative for a larger public. Some additional material, as well as fresh comment and maturer reflection on the part of the man who, whatever his shortcomings, had the sole responsibility for the conduct of this crucial episode in Canadian national life, is ample justification for reprinting the story here, and making it accessible—as, strange to say, it has hitherto not been—in Canada itself.

When the Rebellion broke out in March, 1885, the C.P.R. was not quite completed. The opening of the campaign against Riel was made particularly difficult by this circumstance and by the unusually severe winter weather. Hastening to take charge of operations, General Middleton was able to travel as a civilian by train through Chicago and St. Paul to Winnipeg. Armed Canadian

troops, however, had to keep to an all-Canadian route; and all of those from Ontario and eastward were required, therefore, to make their way as best they could over the 300 miles of broken line in the C.P.R. along Lake Superior between a point near the present station of Chapleau and Red Rock, a few miles west of Nipigon. These 300 miles were the "North Shore" of unhallowed memory.

The winter of 1885 was abnormally long and severe. As the troops made their way along the North Shore at the end of March and the early part of April, the region was covered with snow several feet deep, and the thermometer was steadily away below zero. Colonel Montizambert, who with his artillery was the first to pass, reports 60 degrees below zero; Otter's force had it 25; and even out on the prairie General Middleton records 25 below on April 7. The composite Midland battalion assembled at Kingston on April 2 in a blizzard, with snow "piled mountains high."

Construction of the railway along Lake Superior had been carried on by crews operating east and west from several points at which men and equipment had been landed when the water was open, but which had not yet been able to connect with one another. When the troops from the east reached this almost insurmountable obstacle, the 300 miles were made up of gaps, between which were stretches of roadbed with engines and trains of flatcars running on the newly-laid rails. From end-of-rail on the east side, the line was as follows—a gap of 45 miles, rail for 100 miles, a gap of 23 miles, rail for 45 miles, a gap of 27 miles, rail for 52 miles, a gap of 11 miles. President Van Horne did wonders in aiding transportation and providing occasional meals at construction camps. The first gap was crossed, by the infantry at least, by means of a concentration of teams with bobsleighs. To pass the second gap the troops marched 23 miles across the ice on a bay of Lake Superior. At the third they were teamed again, and the fourth and last gap was done on foot across the ice once more. From Red Rock westward there was unbroken railway to the Rockies. In this North Shore passage each arm of the service—artillery, infantry, and cavalry—had its peculiar difficulties to overcome, and these might differ slightly, too, depending on whether the particular stretch of territory had to be traversed in the daytime or at night. But none could escape the terrible cold of twenty and more below zero, or the days of almost unrelieved strain, or four successive nights

without sleep. Colonel Denison has written a graphic account of the passage with his cavalry, and gives in detail the evidence for thinking that, compared with Napoleon's crossing of the Alps, "our trip was much the worst!" The Lake Superior section was completed before the campaign was over, but on the journey home the troops from Ontario did not need to revisit the transformed scene of their greatest trials; from Fort William the new C.P.R. steamers carried them to Owen Sound.

General Middleton's conduct of the campaign raises many questions. In his account even the commander-in-chief could, of course, speak from personal knowledge only of what took place in the main column under his immediate command. For the rest he had to rely on the reports sent in to him; and it is clear that the commanders of the other two columns, Lieutenant Colonel Otter and Major General Strange, acted largely on their own initiative, and sometimes indeed contrary to general orders given to them by Middleton. When, much against his will, and only after most urgent appeals from the commander of the Mounted Police at Battleford re-inforced by the judgment of Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney, Middleton did allow Otter to hurry with a column to the relief of that important place, his order to Otter was, to "sit tight" there until he should join him. Similarly, General Strange, working with his column from Calgary up to Edmonton and down the Saskatchewan, had orders to await his arrival at Fort Pitt before attacking Big Bear. Both Otter and Strange, feeling justified by a situation which Middleton at a distance could not understand, disobeyed orders by refusing to remain inactive. For this they both, and Otter particularly, got into the General's bad books. His treatment of these two senior officers as well as of others, including Williams, Grasett, and Denison, raises the whole much-disputed question of Middleton's general conduct of the campaign and his qualifications for the post of commander-in-chief. There is no blinking the fact that he made himself cordially disliked by many, if not most, of the officers under him. It is, at the same time, no less true that he possessed in marked degree some of the prime requisites of the soldier. He was utterly fearless, even to what appeared at times unnecessary rashness; in this he was only living up to his high reputation for courage won in earlier campaigns in New Zealand and India. Though already in his sixtieth year, his physical endurance was equal to all the strain under which the

trying campaign placed him. He was indefatigable in personal reconnoitring, and in assuring himself of the security of his men by midnight inspection of picquets and many a duty which, one might think, could have been left to, or at least more often shared with, his subordinate officers. But in spite of all these qualities Middleton failed to win the confidence or the wholehearted loyalty of his troops. Just why, it is hard to say convincingly. Part of the reason was that his willingness to do so much himself easily passed over into a too obvious desire to assume the credit for everything himself.

The fighting force for the campaign of 1885 contained no British regulars, but was supplied entirely by the Canadian militia. The evolution of the Canadian militia as the national defence force since its beginnings a century and a half ago is an index of the needs—and, unfortunately, in recent times of the parliamentary futilities—of our national history. Until the withdrawal of British regular troops just after Confederation, the native militia was reinforced by the presence of regiments from the United Kingdom, and was officered, at first largely and then in steadily decreasing proportion, by British professionals. In spite of the increasing friction that found expression in the Canadian parliament, the post of commander-in-chief continued for nearly twenty years after 1885 to be an appointment from among officers of the British regular army. How the militia should be recruited has always been a crucial question. At first it was based on what surely is and must for ever be the sole principle that will satisfy the self-respect of any virile people—the obligation of universal service in time of need. The unfortunate result has been that this automatic duty of citizenship, which should be voluntary and universal, has been so shirked that parliamentary leaders have too often shrunk to the pygmy dimensions of party politicians, and have allowed racial and religious partisans at last to insinuate “conscription,” with its nasty implication of compulsion, as the equivalent of universal service—a duty which, being national, is in the truest sense voluntary.

In the first stage of the Canadian militia this duty was so utterly voluntary that it brought with it no pay, and recruits had even to supply their own fire-arms. Passing through several phases after the first Upper Canada Militia Act of 1793, the force was placed by that of 1855 upon the footing as to pay, equipment,

training, etc. which it retained with no fundamental change until the time of the North West Rebellion of 1885, when its nominal strength had grown to some 35,000 men. The training of this force had by that time, however, become rather desultory. The recruit was supposed to sign for three years, with twelve days of training in each year. Only in the larger cities were the battalions efficient as to drill, rifle practice, etc. The personnel of those recruited in the country and the smaller places fluctuated much more; though they had an advantage over their urban fellows in the annual drill in camp at brigade headquarters, which gave them at least a taste of more realistic active service conditions. The establishment of several training schools, first for artillery and then for infantry and cavalry, and also of the Royal Military College at Kingston in 1876, raised the training of officers to an equality with those in imperial service, and contributed immensely to the general efficiency of the militia. In the year 1883 a further important advance toward stability was made by the establishment of units of regularly enlisted men in all three services. This is the "Permanent Militia" to which Middleton refers. In the cavalry and infantry they were called "School Corps." Enlistment in these Corps was voluntary, but the men entering them became professional soldiers, and "Regulars" in the fullest sense. Of these, some 355 men served with the North-West Field Force in 1885, more than half of them being of the artillery.

When hostilities began in March, 1885, four places, all on the North Saskatchewan, at once became the chief danger points. These were Prince Albert and Fort Carlton, close to the Halfbreed headquarters at Batoche, and Battleford and Fort Pitt, 160 and 250 miles up the river, and in the midst of Cree Indian tribes, whose chiefs, Poundmaker and Big Bear, had now become open allies of Riel. At each of these places was stationed a detachment of North West Mounted Police, altogether too small, as was immediately evident, to control the situation. The remarkably efficient Mounted Police force had been organized eleven years before, and already their stockaded forts had begun to dot the immense Lone Land between the Rockies and Manitoba, and from the United States border up to and beyond the Saskatchewan River. They performed wonders as keepers of the peace in the early years after the transfer of the territory from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion. But conditions beyond human control suddenly

changed the whole complexion of the life of this Indian and Half-breed population of hunters; the disappearance of the buffalo deprived them of their great essential means of livelihood, and they suddenly found themselves dependent upon the charity of the government. The aid was generous, but its distribution was of necessity coupled with galling restrictions. Treaties confining each Indian tribe within a certain defined area were accepted with reluctance, or sometimes refused, as in the case of Big Bear. All this made ready listeners for Riel with his grandiose plans and promises. In the midst of it, the Mounted Police soon found themselves nearly helpless.

It was natural and necessary for the sake of unity of action that the Mounted Police should be placed under the commander-in-chief along with all the other forces. But in the use of the Mounted Police, General Middleton showed throughout great lack of understanding of their character and of the desperate situation with which they were suddenly confronted. Their strength was hopelessly inadequate for doing what he blandly expected of them. The foolishness of his orders was repeatedly apparent. His persistent stubbornness in the matter of relief to Battleford, for instance, led to his hand being at last forced in an embarrassing way through a direct appeal to Ottawa by Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney, who knew the seriousness of the situation as Middleton did not.

Speaking of his general plan of campaign, Middleton says: "I proposed sending at once [i.e. to Battleford] a reinforcement of Mounted Police under Lieutenant-Colonel Herchmer, from Regina" (pp. 8 ff.). This statement can hardly be reconciled with what he says later: "On this and the following day [April 2] I received rather alarming news from Battleford, the mounted police officer in command there being evidently a pessimist, and from what I could gather, I did not believe Battleford was in any such danger as he described, but I telegraphed to Lieutenant-Colonel Herchmer at Regina to hurry to Battleford with his party of mounted police, and one mountain gun" (p. 17). Thus it was only after repeated calls for help that he consented to do even as much as this. But he should have known that his order to Herchmer could be nothing but a joke. Herchmer just refused to obey it, knowing that he could not then get across the South Saskatchewan, and that, even if he could, his little force of fifty men, only twenty-five mounted, and impeded by the wagons necessary to carry food and fodder,

would be massacred by Poundmaker's Indians long before it traversed the 200 miles to Battleford. To see how far Middleton was from a proper appreciation of the situation, it is only necessary to note that, on the very day of his reluctant order to Herchmer, Big Bear's Indians at Frog Lake massacred nine friendly civilian whites, forcing Captain Dickens and his little detachment of twenty-five Mounted Police to evacuate Fort Pitt and save themselves by a hurried and perilous journey down the Saskatchewan to Battleford. The news of Riel's victory at Duck Lake exactly a week earlier had travelled quickly, with results that showed the people cooped up in the stockade at Battleford what they might expect. Already Poundmaker's Indians and Halfbreeds had made two attempts to gain possession of the place by a treacherous ruse, which was only foiled by the alertness of Inspector Morris. And the Battleford Mounted Police had been reduced to a mere handful of eighteen by the despatch of most of them to the assistance of Prince Albert. It was not until eleven days later still (April 13) that Middleton, listening to an appeal by Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney who had referred the matter to Ottawa, finally ordered an adequate force—Otter's column—to proceed to the relief of Battleford.

After the loss of twelve of his force in the clash at Duck Lake, Major Crozier hurriedly evacuated Fort Carlton as no longer tenable, destroyed it, and retired to Prince Albert. The junction of his force with that of Colonel Irvine put the latter place in a fair position to defend itself against a possible attack by Riel, though even its fate hung in the balance until Middleton's troops loomed up. Colonel Irvine at least was sure that his force was not large enough to warrant his moving out from Prince Albert to attack Batoche, as Middleton wished him to do; on the contrary, he urged the General to come to his aid before launching the attack on the rebel headquarters. As between the two, it was a case of stalemate. But Colonel Irvine at Prince Albert did indirectly assist Middleton, as he remained a potential menace which Riel and Dumont could not quite disregard.

The situation at Battleford, even after Captain Dickens arrived safely from Fort Pitt, was, however, quite different from that at Prince Albert, and vastly more perilous. Middleton's Battleford figures are loose and misleading. The combined Mounted Police force there totalled only forty-three men. There were, in

addition, volunteer Battleford Rifles to the number of forty-five, and a Home Guard of 134 imperfectly armed residents of that district. The weakness of the place was due to the fact that, of the 567 persons cooped up there, 365 were non-combatants, mostly women and children. Inspector Morris's insistent appeals for help, in view of what had just happened at Frog Lake and Fort Pitt, were not just the panicky calls of a "pessimist," but were fully warranted by the facts.

Even when General Middleton had come up to Battleford after disposing of Riel at Batoche, he continued to air his supercilious and often quite faulty judgments. Otter and his column had saved the place; and though in attacking Poundmaker he had exceeded the commander-in-chief's general order to "sit tight," he had definitely achieved one great purpose of the campaign strategy: he had once and for all made it impossible for the two big Indian leaders, now openly on the warpath, to destroy Battleford and unite forces with Riel. This would have postponed the suppression of the rebellion indefinitely. And that such a turn in events was within the limits of the possible, may be seen from the massacre of an American general and his whole regiment by the Sioux chief, Sitting Bull, in neighbouring Dakota only nine years before. The presence of the victorious Sioux chief, now a refugee on the Canadian side of the border, was far from being a stabilizing influence among the Indians of the Northwest.

Middleton here, in his retrospective survey of eight years later, pays a compliment to Otter as an "excellent officer." But he does not chronicle his explosion of wrath against the same Otter at Battleford. Then, too, he has disparaging remarks on the stockaded Fort, and on things in general. The "native college" is of course the industrial school for the instruction of Indian youth in agriculture: the former residence of the Governor had been taken over for the purpose. His "burned and pillaged some of the houses the night of Lieutenant-Colonel Otter's arrival" (p. 83) is nonsense. Poundmaker's Indians, after compelling the residents of the Old Town that had grown up about the Hudson's Bay post on the south side of the Battle River, to flee for shelter over to the Fort, made a shambles of the whole place. On April 23, the night before the troop's arrival, the Indians, knowing this was their last chance, staged a particularly lurid scene of burning and pillage—this time firing the Hudson's Bay stores and Judge Rouleau's residence.

But their riot of destruction had begun on March 29 and continued until April 23. They did not burn up the whole Old Town in a night or two, as they might have done. A big bonfire of a store or a residence with accompanying dances and war-whoops was fun worth prolonging; so they kept it going for 26 days —for the delectation of the owners who looked on helplessly from the fort beyond the river.

General Middleton was handicapped in being the representative of a system that had already been discredited by his predecessors and was destined soon to pass away. From the time of confederation in 1867, a chief relic of colonialism remaining over was the custom of appointing an officer of the British regular army to be commander-in-chief of the Canadian militia. Of the two men who had held this post before Middleton, the first was only a partial success, the second a distinct failure. Though there were in 1885 no longer any British regular troops serving in Canada, the lack of sympathy, if not actual antagonism, between the appointed British regular at the top and the Canadian militia as a whole was inherited by Middleton. And when the Rebellion of 1885 came on, his preference for British "regulars," or at least for those who had seen imperial service, was glaring and distasteful. Nor can we, I think, fail to detect a considerable element of snobbery in his appointments. Good discipline suppressed all but a few open expressions of resentment at his partiality, but it was widespread. All told, Middleton presents an unfortunate contrast with Garnet Wolseley who, fifteen years before, led a mixed force of British regulars and Canadian militiamen to restrain the aberrations of the same Louis Riel, and in so doing won the intense and lasting loyalty of both.

But of the much greater campaign of 1885, it can still be said that all's well that ends well. It is recognized that, considering the difficulty of organizing a very inadequately trained militia for a sudden emergency of such magnitude, and the terrible obstacles of weather and distance that had to be overcome, the suppression of the insurrection in the short space of four months stands out as a very remarkable feat. Much as we may criticize details in the generalship of the commander-in-chief, the end was success.

General Middleton's original plan of campaign was simple. From the base at Qu'Appelle on the C.P.R., he would lead his main column against the Halfbreed headquarters at Batoche on the South Saskatchewan not far from its junction with the north

branch; while Major-General Strange, starting from Calgary some 500 miles farther west, would lead a second column on a much longer journey north to Edmonton and down the North Saskatchewan against an enemy chiefly Indian. The two columns were to converge at Fort Pitt for combined operations against the Indian Chiefs Big Bear and Poundmaker, Middleton having already routed the Halfbreeds under Riel.

Though he stubbornly resisted any change in this simple strategy, Middleton was pushed into an important modification of it. Colonel Otter's well-equipped column of over 500 men, which Middleton had intended to move down the left bank of the river parallel to his own on the right bank in the attack upon Batoche, was on April 13 (eleven days before Middleton's first clash with Riel's forces) ordered to hurry north from Swift Current to the relief of Battleford. This large reduction in the strength of his main column did much to hamper Middleton's own operations; and when he was foolish enough to persist in his tactics and throw half of his reduced force across the river to take the place intended for Otter, he came near to disaster in the first encounter with the rebels at Fish Creek. But the advance was soon resumed; Batoche was finally overrun; Middleton with his main column reached Battleford and received the surrender of Poundmaker, with whom Otter had had a fierce encounter at Cutknife Hill; then he did finally unite with General Strange at Fort Pitt, Big Bear's force was scattered, and the fighting was virtually over.

In conclusion, a few biographical details with regard to General Middleton are in order. Frederick Dobson Middleton was born in Belfast, Ireland in 1825, and died in England in 1898. He was educated for a military career at Sandhurst, and entered the army at seventeen. In 1846 he served against the Maoris in New Zealand, and in 1857-8 in the Indian Mutiny. His connection with Canada began in 1861, when he was a major in the 20th Regiment sent out at the time of the Trent Affair. Ten years later he left Canada when the British regular troops were withdrawn. In 1884 he was appointed to command the Canadian militia, and held that post until 1890. After his return to England he was appointed, in 1896, keeper of the crown jewels in the Tower of London. He died two years later.

At the close of the Riel Rebellion, General Middleton was made a knight commander of St. Michael and St. George, and the Canadian

Parliament voted him \$20,000 for his services. But the closing years of his command of the Canadian militia were marked by an attack upon him in parliament, which he thought sufficiently injurious to his honour to call from him a "Parting Address to the Canadian People." Fierce antagonism between extremists of race and religion in Quebec and Ontario, which took on a serious character with the death of Thomas Scott at the hands of the provisional government set up by Riel in 1870, broke out with renewed and undisguised violence over the execution of the same Riel in November, 1885. Even members of a French-Canadian regiment that had served under General Strange in the suppression of the rebellion took part in anti-English demonstrations in Montreal. Middleton was not allowed to escape the storm in Parliament, where sordid charges of misconduct were brought against him in connection with the confiscation of furs belonging to a rebel at Battleford. Nothing more important was proved against him than a slight misjudgment of the powers which he possessed as commander of the forces; but some of the reckless mudslinging was sure to stick in the public mind. In 1890 Middleton resigned his command, which would have terminated soon in any case.

General Middleton's account of the whole campaign is reprinted in the following pages. The footnotes which appeared in this original account are indicated by asterisks. The editor of the present edition has made comments and corrections in matters of fact in his footnotes which are numbered in arabic numerals and are printed at the end of the text.

SUPPRESSION OF THE REBELLION
IN THE NORTH WEST TERRITORIES OF CANADA,
1885



SUPPRESSION OF THE REBELLION IN THE NORTH WEST TERRITORIES OF CANADA, 1885

GENERAL SIR FRED MIDDLETON

THE short campaign¹ in the North West territories of Canada in 1885 against the rebel French half breeds and Indians under Riel was remarkable as having been carried out solely by colonial militia, who had never seen a shot fired in anger, without the presence of any of the regulars of the mother country, except the General Officer commanding, his Aide de camp, and a few others. It is true a small part of the force employed consisted of some of what is called the "Permanent Militia", regularly enlisted men, who can compare favourably with our regulars, but the main part of the force consisted of the ordinary militia of the country, men who had some of them undergone the usual militia training, some of them having not even had that. These men had all been suddenly called from the desk, the store, the plough, and other civil avocations, to take up arms against a far distant enemy, who bore the character of being wily and brave, perfect bush fighters, and good shots. That these sons of Canada did their duty when thus called upon will I trust be made clear in the following short account of the campaign.

I do not propose entering into all the causes of the rising, and though the movements of the different columns were all made under my directions and orders, I shall confine myself principally to the relation of the movements and actions of the column which was under my immediate personal command, and which chanced to be called upon to take the most prominent action in putting down the rising, only referring to the others when necessary for the perspicuity of my narrative.

On the 23rd of March, at 2 p.m., I was informed by the Minister of Militia and Defence, Mr. (now Sir Adolphe) Caron, that the French half breeds under Riel, the well known rebel who had been driven out of Manitoba by Lord Wolseley in 1870,² were causing such trouble in the North West Terri-

tories as would probably necessitate military action, and that the Premier, Sir J. Macdonald, wished me to start as soon as possible for Winnipeg. Mr. Caron gave me no specific directions, but I understood that on arrival in Manitoba I was to be governed by circumstances, and if necessary take the field against the insurgents in the North West. The Canadian Pacific Railway at that time was not quite finished, and as it was considered necessary that I should lose no time, I had to take the American train through Chicago and St. Paul's from Toronto, for which place I left that evening, with my Aide de camp, Captain E. Wise, then of the Cameronians, now of the Derbyshire Regiment.

We arrived at Winnipeg at 7 a.m. on the 27th³ after three days' and three nights' continuous travelling. I drove at once to Government House, where I learned that reliable news had arrived from the West of the defeat, with the loss of eleven⁴ killed, of a party of North West Mounted Police and Volunteers near Fort Carlton,⁵ a stockaded mounted police station not far from Batoche, Riel's headquarters. After conferring with his honor, Mr. Aikin, the Lieutenant Governor, I resolved to proceed at once to the North West taking with me the Winnipeg Militia, which had already been called out in anticipation, and which consisted of a battery of artillery of 9 pounders M.I., three officers, fifty-nine non-commissioned officers and men, commanded by Major Jarvis, a small troop of cavalry, thirty five strong, commanded by Captain Knight, and the 90th Battalion of Rifles, 290 strong, with twenty-four officers, commanded by Major Mackeand. I inspected these troops at once, and found them in fairly good order and full of fight, and I gave orders that the rifle Regiment should be prepared to start with me that night for Qu'appelle, whither a detachment of thirty men and three officers had already been sent, the battery which was not complete in horses, to follow the next day with the infantry reserve ammunition, and the cavalry to remain behind at Winnipeg.

The weather was very cold, with a good deal of snow on the ground, and each man was supplied with three blankets and a waterproof sheet, being already in possession of fur gloves and caps, mufflers and high snow boots.

During my short stay of a few hours at Winnipeg, I was lucky enough to obtain the services of two men who were to prove of great assistance to me. One was an old friend, Major Boulton,* the other a Captain Bedson, the Warden of the Government Gaol, at Stoney Mountain, near Winnipeg. Boulton had served at Gibraltar with our 100th Regiment⁶ in 1860, when I was Aide de camp to the General commanding the brigade there. He soon after left our service, and being Canadian born, returned to Canada, and eventually settled down there, near the Shell river. He had been made prisoner by Riel in his first rising in 1869, and barely escaped being shot by him as a poor settler called Scott⁷ was. Boulton heard of my arrival, found me out, and offered to raise a small body of mounted scouts, and join my force. I at once accepted, and I may add here that he joined me on the 15th April, seventeen days after he had received authority from Ottawa to raise them, with sixty men horsed, equipped, armed with repeating Winchester rifles, with transport complete; and right good yeoman service did he and his men perform during the campaign. Bedson had served in our 16th Regiment, and his services were simply invaluable to me during the whole campaign. He is dead, I regret to say, after attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Canadian Militia.

I left Winnipeg at 6 p.m. of the day of my arrival there with the 90th Rifles, 260 strong, having with me, besides my Aide-de-camp, Lieutenant-Colonel Houghton, Deputy-Adjutant-General of the District, Captain Bedson, Mr. Secretan, a friend of Bedson's and a Mr. Macdowall,† a gentleman in the lumbering trade at Prince Albert, both of whom were also of great use to me afterwards.

We arrived the next morning at about 9 a.m. at Troy,⁸ which is, or was the name given to the Canadian Pacific Railway Station at Qu'appelle. Here we detrained, and as the weather was very cold, and a great deal of snow on the ground, I put the troops into the emigration sheds instead of encamping them in their bell-tents. My reason for selecting Qu'appelle as the primary base was that it was the nearest spot

*Now the Honorable Lieutenant-Colonel Boulton, Canadian Senator.

†Since a member of the Dominion Parliament.

on the Canadian Pacific Railway line to Winnipeg—which may be said to have been my real base—from whence there was a direct trail to Batoche, Riel's headquarters.

I was met here by His Honour, Mr. Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, with whom we proceeded to the so-called hotel of the small town of Qu'appelle, no very luxurious establishment, but which I made my headquarters during my stay there. I passed the most of the day with my Aide-de-camp in sending and receiving telegrams, mostly in cipher, which made it tedious work. In the evening before he left for Regina, I had a long conference with Mr. Dewdney, who, I may mention here, assisted me to the full extent of his power in every way during the whole campaign. I found from him that Battleford and Prince Albert were the two most important settlements supposed to be in danger. They are both situated on the north branch of the Saskatchewan river, about 100 miles apart by land and about 280 and 170 miles by trail respectively, from Qu'appelle. Batoche, the rebel headquarters on the south branch of the Saskatchewan, is about thirty-eight miles south of Prince Albert and about eighty miles east of Battleford.

We were still in telegraphic communication with Battleford by Clarke's Crossing, but Riel had cut the wire passing by Batoche to Prince Albert, which latter place, therefore communicated with us by mounted messengers to Battleford and Humboldt. Mr. Dewdney considered that Prince Albert was comparatively safe, as Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine, commanding the North West Mounted Police, was there with a force consisting of 180 mounted police, ninety volunteers, and a mountain gun, with plenty of ammunition and food for a month; but Battleford was supposed to be in a more ticklish position, being in dangerous propinquity to a large band of Indians under a somewhat famous chief called Poundmaker, who was known to be discontented and in communication with Riel. However, it was garrisoned by a party of forty-seven mounted police, with a volunteer company of some thirty-five settlers, who, with the women and children, were all living in the so-called fort or stockade, with clear ground round about it, the rest of the settlement having been abandoned. There was also an important Hudson Bay post

at Fort Pitt, a stockade on the North Saskatchewan, some ninety miles to the north of Battleford, which was then being held by a detachment of twenty-four mounted policemen under Inspector Dickens, son of the late Charles Dickens. They were also in danger, being in close proximity to another large body of unfriendly Indians under a chief known as Big Bear.

The Indians still further to the west about Calgary, and Fort Macleod and Edmonton, were known to be discontented, but were kept in check by mounted police, and near Gleichen there was a large reserve of Blackfoot Indians under an important chief called Crowfoot, but whom Mr. Dewdney thought likely to remain quiet. Indeed, he suggested that I should have a small party of them attached as scouts to my force, but that I declined, not thinking it advisable.

Up to this time the Red Indians had not joined Riel in any numbers, but were what is called "sitting on the fence" awaiting events, and it was generally feared that there might be a general rising of them, if the Government troops met with any serious reverse.

It was known that Riel was doing all he could to induce them to join him at once,⁹ sending his messengers far and wide loaded with false statements. Among other lies, he informed them that England was engaged in a war with Russia, and could not spare a man of her army to help the Canadian Government, whose own soldiers were no use, and could not fight or move in the prairies, and that a large body of Fenians and Indians from the United States with artillery were coming to join him, etc. He even tried to work the old "eclipse of the sun" dodge. Having ascertained from an almanack that there was soon to be an eclipse of the sun, he informed the Indians that on that day the sun would be darkened, and as soon as they saw that, they were to consider it a warning from the "Manitou" for them to rise at once against the Whites and join him, after plundering the settlements near them.

On the whole, Mr. Dewdney was of opinion that affairs were in a very critical state, and if we were defeated, the consequences would be most disastrous to the country, as there would probably be a general rising of the Indians.

He further informed me that Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine had telegraphed to him to warn me that the rebels were good shots, and that I should not start without at least 1500 men. I told him that I could not afford to wait for that number, as it might be weeks before I could get them, and that I should advance as soon as possible with what troops I could muster, and trust to getting reinforcements later on, and I telegraphed to that effect to the minister at Ottawa, at the same time writing to him to explain my proposed plan of operation, which was as follows—

To move the principal column under my own command direct to Clarke's Crossing, a telegraph station and ferry on the South Saskatchewan about forty miles by trail from Batoche. A second column under Lieutenant-Colonel Otter,¹⁰ a capable officer belonging to the permanent Militia, who was coming up with reinforcements, to meet me there from Swift Current, a Canadian Pacific Railway station some 150 miles to the westward of Troy and a few miles from the south branch of the Saskatchewan, which I was recommended to use eventually as a line of communication, making Swift Current my main base. I was given to understand by an old scout that I might fall in with the enemy at or near Clarke's Crossing, and it seemed somewhat probable, but, if not, the two columns would then move, one on each side of the river, and attack Batoche, which I understood had houses and Indian camps on both sides of the river, with a large ferry boat to connect them. After the capture, one column, if necessary, might march on to Prince Albert, the other pushing on to Battleford, whither I proposed sending at once a reinforcement of mounted police under Lieutenant-Colonel W. Herchmer, from Regina, the mounted police having been put under my command. A third column I proposed forming at Calgary, giving the command to Major-General Strange,¹¹ late R.A., and commanding the Canadian Militia, who had placed his services at the disposal of the Government. This column, after over-awing the Indians in the district, would move on to Edmonton, and proceed down the North Saskatchewan to Fort Pitt, where I hoped to meet them after having disposed of Poundmaker and his band. We should then together follow up, and dispose of Big Bear, which would pretty well break the neck of the rebellion.

I also would shortly have two small bodies of mounted scouts patrolling East and West of the Cypress Hills between the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the American frontier, not only to watch any Fenian or Indian advance from the United States that might chance to take place, but also, if possible, to bar the most probable line of retreat to the States of the defeated rebels.

I soon came to the conclusion that I could not, at least at first, spare troops to keep my communications open, but that did not trouble me much, as, from what I could gather, I made up my mind that the rebels would not wander far afield, but would remain in or close to Batoche. Moreover, while my reinforcements were coming up, my communications would be kept open, and lastly, it was evidently necessary that I should make a forward movement without delay, and with as great a show of force as I could muster.

The next day, the 28th, I set to work to make arrangements for the immediate advance of the troops I had with me. I appointed Captain Bedson chief transport officer, with Mr. Secretan as his assistant, and Captain Swinford, of the 90th, chief commissariat officer, and with their able assistance was able to extemporize a good working system of transport and commissariat. Afterwards our transport and stores, etc., were nearly all supplied through the Hudson Bay Company; Mr. Wrigley, their chief commissioner, being most indefatigable and successful in his endeavours to make things go smoothly.

The medical arrangements had also to be considered. The old English system of each regiment having its own medical man was then in vogue with the Canadian Militia, and I had only an assistant surgeon with the 90th Regiment; the surgeon, Dr. Orton, being at Ottawa attending to his duties as a member of the Canadian Parliament, but who intended to join his regiment, as he eventually did, on the 9th of April. In the meantime the assistant surgeon, who had a pair of field panniers, was sufficient for our immediate wants, and I knew the Minister of Militia was organizing a small medical staff corps with the assistance of Dr. Bergin, M.P.

It was still very cold, and there was a good deal of snow on the ground, but some horses having arrived, sent by the

Hudson Bay Company for myself and staff, my Aide-de-camp and I were obliged to try them with swords on. Most of them proved fairly quiet, and I selected a large black gelding, which carried me well throughout the whole campaign, becoming well known later on as "Sam", a skilful thief when forage was scarce. They were all a useful lot of animals, costing on an average about 200 dollars. The saddles sent with the horses were all Mexican saddles, which are those principally used in the North-West. Nearly all my scouts and the mounted police used them. This saddle has a very sharp tree, and a horn on the pommel for the lasso or "lariat" to be fastened to; the stirrups, made of wood, are very large and worn long, the leg of the rider being almost straight. The saddle is fastened on in a peculiar way by strong strips of green hide attached to the girth drawn through iron rings fixed on the saddle. Those accustomed to their use prefer these saddles, but I was very glad that I had my own English saddle.

It was very necessary to have horses accustomed to the country, as the prairies are full of holes made by badgers and gophers, the latter being a sort of ground squirrel with the habits and customs of the prairie dog. "Muskegs" or treacherous bogs, are also frequently met with, which are sometimes very dangerous if not impassable, especially to horses not accustomed to them. These particularly disagreeable prairie obstacles are said to be caused by the common practice of the beaver of damming up small streams so as to obtain a pool to live and play in; and it is the case that you generally come across traces of beaver occupancy of ground in the neighbourhood of these "muskegs." Moreover, the western horses were accustomed to be picketed out in extreme cold weather, and to starve or half-starve occasionally on prairie grass. A knowledge of all this determined me not to attempt to use any of the militia cavalry with the columns,¹² as not suitable for the work, but to post any that might be sent up, on the line of communication between Qu'appelle and Humboldt, there being several small bands of Indians and some half-breeds of doubtful character about the Touchwood Hills between these two places. This was afterwards carried out; the Governor-General's Body Guard from

Toronto, about seventy strong, under Lieutenant-Colonel G. Denison, being posted at Humboldt, and the Cavalry School Corps, a troop about forty strong (permanent force), under Lieutenant-Colonel F. Turnbull, at Touchwood. Both these posts were important, and I had every reason to be satisfied with the zealous and admirable manner in which the duties connected with them were carried out by the two able commanders.

While inspecting some wagons we were going to hire for our transport, I was shown a comfortable sort of covered ambulance with two fine large mules, which rejoiced in the names respectively of "Dewdney" and "Reed,"¹³ after the Lieutenant-Governor and his secretary, and was informed by one of my staff that this affair was meant for my use on the march. Much amused at the idea, I assured my informant that I intended to ride or march, and unless ill or wounded should certainly not trouble "Dewdney" and "Reed" to drag me about.

A Captain French, who had been in the Irish Militia, brother of a distinguished artillery officer, came to me during the day and offered to raise a small party of scouts from among the settlers in the neighbourhood of Fort Qu'appelle. He had lately been an officer in the mounted police, in which force he bore a very high character for intelligence and pluck, and had not long left it for the purpose of marrying and settling in the Qu'appelle valley. He was naturally well acquainted with the Indians and the country, and as I knew that Boulton could not be with me for some days, I accepted his offer, and authorized him to raise at once twenty-five or thirty men from among the settlers of the neighbourhood, the men to receive five dollars a day and find their own horses. French succeeded in getting together a very first-rate party of about thirty men, well mounted and armed with repeating Winchesters, in three or four days, and joined me at Fort Qu'appelle. There were several men of good birth¹⁴ among the party, among them being the Hon. M. Gifford, Hon. E. Fiennes, and the whole of them did good service, French, Gifford and Fiennes being especially useful and hard-working. The two latter were principally used by Lord Melgund and myself as orderly officers, sometimes riding long distances by themselves at great personal risk.

We had a good deal of telegraphing during the day, which was cold and raw, a great deal of snow falling.

A great many reports were rife about the Indians rising, and about the strength of the half-breeds under Riel. I may say here that during the whole campaign I was constantly receiving from different parts of the country most alarming reports, some of them coupled with pitiful requests for troops, or arms and ammunition. A great many of these reports were totally without foundation, and the rest greatly exaggerated. At first I was rendered very uneasy, especially as it would have required at least 5000 men, and the same number of arms, with ammunition to comply with their requests, but I soon began to find out that, at this crisis, exaggeration was a "prairie peculiarity," and at last I named these stories and reports "Nor'-Westers," and it came to be a joke in my force about "the General's horror of Nor'-Westers."

On the morning of the 30th March, I sent off under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Houghton, a wing of the 90th Regiment, 145 strong, and one nine-pound gun, and twenty five men of the battery to Fort Qu'appelle, an old Hudson Bay post about eighteen miles off our road. As it was their first march, I sent two or three empty wagons with them, to give the men a lift occasionally. Captain Bedson drove me over to Fort Qu'appelle that afternoon in a "buck-board" a peculiar sort of carriage, of simple construction, used in the country. I found the party had arrived quite fresh, though marching had been heavy, owing to the slushy snow. The occasional lifts in the carts had been very acceptable to the men.

Fort Qu'appelle is really only a cluster of wooden buildings surrounded by a stockade, but a small town has grown up around it. It lies on a small river running through a broad valley with high land on each side of it. The river just here widens out into two or three small lakes, the scenery being very fine. The place owes its name to a curious echo¹⁵ which the valley is said to possess.

Mr. Archie McDonald, the Hudson Bay factor there, entertained us at luncheon, and we made arrangements with him for the supply of 200 carts to be got in as soon as possible,

and drove back to Qu'appelle. Next day the weather was very bad, and it snowed hard, especially towards and during the night. Busy again with telegrams and preparations. I decided to leave Captain Swinford at Qu'appelle, for the present and appointed a Mr. Underwood—who had been an officer in our regular army—supply officer to the column, and a very good officer he proved to be. I also secured the services of a Major Bell, superintendent of the Bell farm, near Qu'appelle, who was of great assistance, and did good service throughout in procuring and forwarding carts and forage to the front. I heard from Ottawa that the following troops had left for the front:

		<i>N.C.O's</i>	<i>Officers. & men.</i>	<i>Horses.</i>	<i>Guns.</i>
Royal Canadian Artillery A and B					
Batteries (permanent)	13	..	213	..	27 .. 4
Infantry School Corps.—C Company.					
(permanent)	5	..	85	..	
2nd Battalion (Queen's Own)	18	..	257	..	
10th Battalion (Royal Grenadiers) . .	17	..	250		

These troops were coming up by Canadian Pacific Railway, though there were still unfinished gaps in the line to the east of Port Arthur; but it was thought better, as a matter of policy, to use our own line, as it undoubtedly was, though the troops had to cross those gaps under great difficulties, both of ground and weather. An extract from the report to me of Lieutenant-Colonel Montizambert, commanding the artillery on this march, will give an idea of these difficulties and hardships which were so cheerfully borne by these citizen soldiers, both infantry and artillery:—

“Here began the difficulties of passing the gaps on the unconstructed portion of the road. About 400 miles between the west end of the track and Red Rock or Nipigon, 66 miles from Port Arthur, had to be passed by a constantly varying process of embarking and disembarking guns and stores from flat cars to country team sleighs and vice versa. There were 16 operations of this nature in cold weather and deep snow. On starting from the west-end of the track on the night of the 30th March the roads were found so bad that it took the guns

17 hours to do the distance (30 miles) to Magpie camp. On from there to east-end of the track by team sleighs and marching 23 miles further on, on flat cars (uncovered and open) 80 miles, with the thermometer at 50 deg. below zero. Heron Bay, Port Munro, McKellar's Bay, Jackfish, Isbester, McKay's Harbour were passed by alternate flat cars on construction tracks; and, teaming in fearful weather round the north shore of lake Superior, Nipigon or Red Rock was reached on the evening of the third April. The men had had no sleep for four nights."

On the 31st March which was a bitter cold day, with heavy snow towards the evening, I devoted myself to organizing and telegraphing and on the 1st April, to my great satisfaction, Lord Melgund¹⁶ arrived from the East. He was an old Guardsman, and as I knew, had been lately serving with mounted infantry in the field. I had telegraphed to him to say, I should be glad if he would join me, if his Excellency Lord Lansdowne could spare him for a time from his duties as Military Secretary. His Excellency most kindly and thoughtfully did spare him, and I received the most cheerful and valuable support and assistance from Lord Melgund (now the Earl of Minto) during the whole time he was with me. I observed on that morning several strangers in the little hotel, and was soon enlightened as to their business. They were newspaper correspondents, four being Canadian, and one a Yankee. As regards them and their after proceedings, I may say here that the Canadians were anxious to do, and did do, their work honestly and fairly according to their lights, with one exception, and his fault arose more from error of judgement than intention, though I was obliged to send him away from my camp. The Yankee reporter was all right at first, but latterly fell off and got rather wild in his statements. They were all more or less handicapped by the novelty of their positions as war-correspondents, and when I was obliged to decline confiding all my information and intentions to them, they were more or less inclined to attribute it to my not knowing myself what I was going to do! I must, however, except one of the Canadians, a Mr. Chambers, whom I always found to be reasonable and satisfied with what I could tell him. Later

on we were joined by the well-known Mr. Henty,¹⁷ as correspondent of the Standard, which was the only English paper that condescended to send a war-correspondent to us; however, we could not have had a better representative of the English press.

During this and the following day, I received rather alarming news from Battleford, the mounted police officer in command there being evidently a pessimist, and from what I could gather, I did not believe Battleford was in any such danger as he described, but I telegraphed to Lieutenant-Colonel Herchmer, at Regina, to hurry on to Battleford with his party of mounted police and one mountain gun.

The next day, the 2nd, I left Qu'appelle at 8.30 a.m. with the other wing of the 90th, and the other gun of the battery, and arrived at Fort Qu'appelle at 12.15 p.m. after a longish and sloppy march owing to the melting snow, as it was a fine sunshiny day. The men in this case were also assisted by occasional lifts in wagons. They camped with the others, and my staff and self put up at the hospitable abode of Mr. McDonald, the Hudson Bay factor.

The next day, the 3rd, I had my "army" out early at blank cartridge firing, to see how our steeds would stand it, and found that they nearly all stood the firing well, chargers as well as draught horses. I then tried a little drill with the 90th, which they went through very well, considering that they had had very little training of any sort, the regiment having been formed quite lately by Lieutenant-Colonel Kennedy, who had gone to Egypt with the Canadian boatmen, and of whose sad death by smallpox we were so soon to hear. After the drill was over I went down the ranks of the 90th, and questioned each man, and found that many of them had never fired a rifle, some even had never fired any weapon at all. This was not a cheerful look-out after receiving Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine's telegram to Mr. Dewdney, dwelling on the excellence of the shooting of the half-breeds, and that my force should be 1500 strong, and another message from the same to the same, which one of my telegraphic operators intercepted, to the following effect: "Matters are in a very critical state—feel confident all Indians will join rebels if immediate steps are not taken: 1,500 men

sufficient if immediately sent in, otherwise several thousand will be required. Teton Sioux roaming the country on the warpath," etc.

I ordered the regiment to parade for ball-practice in the afternoon, some of their men themselves making and putting up three movable targets with marker's butts, in the meanwhile. I here discovered, in the handiness and capability of the men as workmen, a superiority in the Canadian Militia-men over our regular soldiers.

The ball-practice was continued the next day, and accustomed the men to the recoil of their weapon if it did nothing else. At this time the whole of the Canadian Militia, cavalry and infantry were armed with the Snider, and it was feared at first that we should be at a disadvantage, as the half-breeds were known to be most of them well armed with repeating rifles. It was at one time proposed to arm the troops being sent forward with Martini Henrys, of which there were some 10,000 in store, but I did not think it advisable to put an entirely new arm into the hands of men just entering into a campaign, particularly one which was known to have a much greater recoil: better not to "swap horses crossing a stream," as President Lincoln once said. The Sniders were therefore retained, and, as it proved, they were quite good enough for our work when they were held straight.

Fifty of the best shots of one regiment were armed with Martini Henrys, but we never derived much advantage from them. The few pieces of artillery we had were all muzzle-loaders, nine-pounders, but that did not matter much, as we knew the enemy were not to be feared in respect of artillery, though they were said to have one or two guns, which proved, however, to be only a "Nor'-Wester."

Thanks to the energy of Mr. Archie McDonald, assisted by Major Bell, a good many teams came in, and Bedson collected a quantity of hay and oats. The price of forage had naturally gone up, and as far as I can remember the price then was, hay twenty dollars a ton, and oats, one dollar fifty cents a bushel. These wagons, or teams as they are called in the North-West, constituted our transport during the whole campaign. They were the ordinary waggons used

by the farmers of the country, and were lightly though strongly built on four high wheels, which were very narrow as compared with those of English carts. They proved admirably suited for rough work and roads, and were able to go wherever the guns went. They were drawn by two horses of a good class, and were capable of carrying about one-and-a-half-tons weight. The cost at first was high, but, after all, not much more than they were worth at the time to the Government. It was ten dollars per team—including driver—per diem, and all found. The forage allowed was forty pounds of oats and thirty pounds of hay, the teamster receiving the same ration as the soldier, with arms and ammunition. Later on the price of forage and line of wagons was much reduced. A man of the name of Gordon came in from Prince Albert with an account of the fight at Duck Lake.

The next day was Sunday, and after divine service I rode out on the trail* we should have to follow on the morrow. I found that the bridge across the stream joining two small lakes required strengthening to allow the infantry and wagons to pass, and that the guns would have to ford it. The ascent to the plateau was also very steep and muddy. After that the trail appeared fair enough. The view from the plateau of the valley, with the settlements and the tents was very picturesque.

On my return I sent men at once to work at the strengthening of the bridge, which was done in a few hours.

This day, 5th April, I put Lord Melgund in orders as chief of the staff.

Among other graver points to be considered in my arrangements for the forthcoming campaign was the question of "drink." At that time the sale of all stimulants, including beer, was prohibited in the North-West Territories from the fear that the Indians might get it, liquor of any sort having the effect of bringing out all their bad qualities and deadening any good ones they might chance to possess, and the half-breed were not much better. The whites in the territories were allowed in certain circumstances to obtain a permit for the introduction of a small quantity of liquor into the territories, but these permits were only obtained from the

*Prairie roads are always called "trails" in the North-West.

Lieutenant-Governor himself, who was very chary of granting them. It is needless to say that under these circumstances most extraordinary stratagems were had recourse to, in order to smuggle liquor into the country. Eggs, carefully opened and cleaned, were filled with liquor and then carefully fastened up and imported as eggs in boxes. Casks, filled with whiskey and a little kerosene oil poured into them, were imported as lamp oil, medicine-bottles, labelled "Davis's Pain Killer" and "Jamaica Ginger" filled with pure whiskey, etc. etc.

The question for my consideration was whether I should allow the troops to have a certain ration of liquor, in which case, of course, the Government would allow of its being admitted for their use. It was pointed out to me that most of the men in the militia, though not by any means drunkards, were in the habit of having a certain amount of stimulants daily,¹⁸ some few a good deal, and that, with the cold weather and hardships they would have to undergo, the sudden withdrawal of stimulants might have a deleterious effect, etc. After due consideration, bearing in mind that Lord Wolseley allowed no liquor in the Red River Expedition of 1870, I resolved that I would allow none to be issued to the troops on this Expedition, or to be carried with them either by officers or men, except a certain amount as medical comforts. It was a bold step to take under the circumstances of the case, but I was fully borne out by the result.

At first a few men suffered from pains in their limbs from sleeping on wet or damp ground and there were a few cases of frost-bites, and cold and coughs, also a few cases of snow-blindness, to meet which the Government had supplied goggles, but in a short time this was got over, and there was little or no sickness, severe as was the weather, and the men who had believed that they would surely succumb to this deprivation of their accustomed stimulants found themselves in the end of the campaign in better health than they had been for years before. I do not mean to say that there was a perfect absence of drink in my camp, as in spite of all my care I fear that some was occasionally surreptitiously obtained, but the amount thus introduced was so small that I may say that my orders were virtually carried out. As for myself, I can honestly say I carried out my own orders, and that from

the day I left Qu'appelle to the day I arrived at Winnipeg on my return home, not a drop of any stimulant passed my lips, in which I believe I was imitated by the great majority of my officers. Hot tea was generally available for everyone at all times, and was found a much better preventative for colds and coughs than any amount of spirits could have been. I also attribute in part our freedom from ill-effects consequent on exposure to rain and cold to the free use of tobacco, which was always plentiful, and was almost universally used.

I received here a message from Mr. Caron informing me that he had heard Battleford was to be attacked immediately by six hundred Indians, and asking me to make arrangements to meet this danger, which, though not believing in their necessity, I had already done by ordering Lieutenant-Colonel Herchmer, with fifty men and one mountain gun, to proceed at once from Regina to Battleford. I continued to receive such urgent appeals from Superintendent Morris at Battleford that I telegraphed to him that I would march on Battleford from Clarke's Crossing, after disposing of Riel. While here, with the assistance of Captain Bedson and a man well acquainted with the prairies, I selected on the map certain spots for camping. The camp stations were named, some of them after officers with the force, and a few teams were generally sent on the day before to collect firewood, etc., under Mr. Sinclair, the foreman of teamsters, an excellent man, sometimes under Mr. Secretan himself, they and the teamsters being armed and old prairie hands.

THE preparations for the march to which I referred in the last number having been completed, we started on the 6th of April at 7 a.m., strength all told 402, including my new levy of scouts. The weather was cold, and the road up the north bank was steep and heavy, and we had to use four horses to get each of our 120 wagons up to the top, and six for each gun and wagon. We marched off with the usual formation, scouts leading. As this was our first regular march, I halted after covering about twelve miles over a wet and heavy trail, with a strong wind in our faces, accompanied by occasional flurries of sleet and hail, but the men bore it all wonderfully well.

I am afraid the dress of my Aide-de-camp and myself would have astonished if not horrified an Aldershot General and his Aide-de-camp. We were both clad in short buffalo skin coats, staff pantaloons, fur service caps, and long English shooting boots, with jack spurs. Swords were worn under, and revolvers over, our coats. The men and officers were in the regular British uniform, supplemented with snow boots, fur caps and gloves, and most of them with hideous red comforters round their necks.

Towards night it became bitterly cold, the thermometer standing at 10 deg. below zero, and we had a hard night of it. Though I lay down dressed, with two blankets and my buffalo coat over me and two blankets under me, I could not get warm and did not sleep much. In the morning we found all our pegs frozen hard in the ground, the thermometer standing at 23 deg. below zero. We had eventually to cut the pegs out with axes, and so did not march until 8.30 a.m. We halted after a march of about eighteen miles. The night was cold though not so cold as the night before. We halted the next day, April 8th, to enable Lieutenant-Colonel Montizambert, with two guns of A Battery, Permanent Force, to join us, which they did about 10 a.m., 100 strong and two M.1. 9-pounders. The officers, men and horses looked wonderfully well and fit, and they appeared none the worse for their long and tedious journey of over 2000 miles by rail and trail including the passage of the gaps. Marched next day, the 9th of April, and halted near the Hudson Bay Post at Touchwood, after doing twenty-one miles. Still very cold. Here we received the sad news of the massacre at Frog Lake, a settlement near Fort Pitt. Nine men killed, including the Hudson Bay official¹⁹ and two priests; also two women and several men taken prisoners, all whites. This outrage was committed by Big Bear's people. I received that day more unsatisfactory telegrams from the officer in charge of Battleford. I telegraphed to Major-General Strange, late R.A., who was residing near Gleichen, not far from Calgary, to assume command of the force forming in that district. He had volunteered his services which were gladly accepted, as he was well known in the Dominion, having lately retired from the command of the Artillery including A and B batteries

of the Permanent Force, who owed their efficiency greatly to his care and instruction. He had previously served with distinction in the Indian Mutiny. His orders from me, generally, were to move via Edmonton on Fort Pitt, where I should meet him and together we should tackle Big Bear.

The next day, 10th of April, after a march of twenty-three miles, we halted and camped during a heavy snowstorm. Here we were joined by forty men of C School, Permanent Force, a smart looking body of well-drilled men, commanded by Major Smith, an officer who proved himself to be as good and reliable in the field as he was in the barracks. Major-General Laurie arrived with this party. He was on half-pay, a Crimean officer, living in Nova Scotia, and had volunteered to serve under me though senior in the Army. Our line of march followed the telegraph line, which being lightly constructed, was often down. I found that the best operator I had with me, was Mr. E. Wood, a bombardier in the Winnipeg Battery, whom I made chief telegrapher.

When we halted, the wire was at once tapped, and Mr. Wood's tent became our telegraph office. He would start off sometimes alone to repair a rupture of the wire without fear or hesitation. Riel did not interfere much with the telegraph wire, contenting himself with cutting it between Batoche and Prince Albert, as he thought he might, after defeating me, require to use the wire to communicate with Ottawa and make terms with the Government!

On this march I had an interview, or, as it is termed there, a "Pow-wow," with an Indian chief, "Day Star," and his people at the Indian Farm. These Indians were supposed to be inclined to be troublesome, but the chief, of course, expressed the greatest loyalty, and received the usual presents of tea, bacon, tobacco, and flour.

Next morning we started at 6 a.m. to make our way across the Salt Plains, which we had heard was a dreadful piece of work. It certainly was not a pleasant march, but not so very dreadful. It was cold and dreary, and the trail was awfully muddy. We had frequent flurries of snow, and had to pass through marshes and several streams, so that the infantry were often up to their knees, and once nearly to their waists in water. It was very cold and, as we had to carry our fire-

wood with us, we could not afford large fires. All the water was strongly impregnated with alkaline salt—hence the term "Salt Plains"—and could only be drunk when make into tea, which did not taste very nice however.

We halted at one of our march stations in the middle of the Salt Plains, after doing twenty miles, the men continuing to march wonderfully well. They were in good spirits, and sang a good deal, principally indulging in plantation songs and Canadian boat songs with rousing choruses.

A dispatch arrived from Irvine, in which he informed me that he had 180 Mounted Police and ninety Prince Albert Volunteers—25,000 rounds of Winchester ammunition, 9,000 of Snider, besides 5,900 of revolver, and eight shells for mountain gun. Plenty of beef, but only enough flour and other provisions in the country to last a month. He had also three doctors, and added that he had 150 or 200 more men without arms.

I continued, however to receive such heartrending appeals from Superintendent Morris at Battleford, that I telegraphed that day, 11th of April, to Lieutenant-Colonel Otter, at Swift Current, to leave at once for Battleford with all the troops he had. He left there on the 13th with

	Men and Officers.
B Battery Royal Canadian Artillery, Major Short Commanding— two guns, one gatling.	113
Detachment C Company Infantry School Corps, Lieut. Wadmore Commanding.	49
Detachments Governor-General's Foot Guards, Capt. Todd Commanding.	51
Queen's Own Rifles (two regiments), Lieut.-Colonel Miller Commanding.	274
North-West Mounted Police, Lieutenant-Colonel E. Herckmer Commanding.	50
Scouts	6
	<hr/>
	Total . . . 543

Lieutenant-Colonel Otter belonged to the Permanent Force, and had been in command of C Company School of Infantry at Toronto, and I knew him to be an excellent officer. My orders to him were to push on with all speed, hold Battleford, and wait my arrival there.

The march made by this force after crossing the river at Saskatchewan landing was a remarkably good one, though the infantry were carried in wagons.²⁰ The distance covered was over 160 miles, and it was done in five and a half days, with a long train, as they had to carry twenty-five days' rations, twenty days' oats, ten days' hay, and four days' wood, besides the infantry.

We started next morning at 7 a.m., and in an hour and a half got clear out of the Salt Plains, which luckily for us, had held the winter frost, so that in the muddy and marshy places, a few inches below the mud, the bottoms were quite hard, otherwise we should have been days crossing them. Halted after a twenty-mile march.

Next day, the 13th of April, we halted at Humboldt after doing twenty-one miles. The trail bifurcates here, one going direct to Batoche or Prince Albert, the other to Clarke's Crossing. There was a telegraph station and two or three houses.

Hitherto I had only had one piquet mounted at night, but now I thought it advisable to mount two. While at Fort Qu'appelle, I was told by an old hunter that he did not think I was ever likely to be attacked at night, as the Indians believe that if killed after dark they will be for ever blind in their "Happy Hunting Grounds"—their Elysium—and he added that many of the half-breeds were as superstitious as the Indians. As a matter of fact we never were attacked at night. Still, I was very particular during the whole campaign about our outposts, visiting them myself, or sending Melgund, or going together every night, as I found it gave confidence to my raw troops. Major-General Laurie²¹ left us that day for Swift Current, I having, with his concurrence, appointed him commandant at the base which I had determined to establish at that point.

Swift Current was about twenty-five miles from the "Landing" on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River, which I hoped would soon be high enough, on account of the melting snow, to permit of the steamers communicating with me at Clarke's Crossing. There was also a direct trail from the Landing to Battleford. I still kept Qu'appelle as a secondary base, being excellently well served there by Captain

Swinford as commissariat officer, and Major Bell as transport officer. The duties of commandant at Swift Current became onerous and complicated, but they were well and ably carried out by Major-General Laurie.

Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine in his communications with me at this time was very urgent that I should pass by Batoche and march direct to Prince Albert, as he considered our forces ought to be united before attacking Riel. This plan I did not feel at all inclined to adopt, as it would be bad strategy, would encourage Riel to think we were afraid of him, and cause the Indians to join him, and I made up my mind to attack Batoche and direct Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine to move out with some 150 Mounted Police and co-operate on the west side of the river. Captain Bedson and Mr. Macdowall volunteered to carry my orders to Colonel Irvine, and I felt constrained to accept their offer, though some of the couriers from Prince Albert had thrilling stories to relate of their hairbreadth escapes from fierce and wily Indians. I knew my two gallant volunteers could take good care of themselves, and it was important that Irvine should be clearly informed of my intentions, which it was not advisable to put on paper. In my message I told Colonel Irvine that I believed Riel's forces were much over-rated, and I proposed attacking him on the following Saturday, the 25th of April; that I wished him to take steps to cut off fugitives that would probably cross the river; that I might not be able to attack until Sunday, or I might attack before Saturday; that I supposed he could keep himself almost daily acquainted with my movements by his scouts, and act accordingly; that he was to take all the men he could safely withdraw from Prince Albert, but not his mountain gun.

We had now marched 124 miles from Fort Qu'appelle* in eight days, including a day's halt, over a bad trail, in worse weather, which was good work for untrained men. We had little or no sickness, plenty of supplies, tea, tobacco, canned meats, bacon, and capital biscuits, called by the men "hard tack"—and the whole force was in good heart.

We halted the next day, the 14th, and I took out French's scouts for a reconnaissance towards Batoche, but saw nobody.

*Our men marched without packs.

Captain Haig, Royal Engineers, joined the camp that day. He was stationed at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and had offered his services, which I was very glad to have. I made him Assistant Quarter-Master-General, in which capacity he was most energetic and useful during the campaign, besides acting on my personal staff during the two engagements with great coolness and pluck.

After a cold, wet and blowy night, we started next day, April 15th at 7 a.m., and halted after a twenty-three mile march, the day remaining windy and very cold. We were now within thirty-six miles of Clarke's Crossing, and with a view of anticipating the enemy, I determined to push on there next morning with a small party, leaving the rest of my force to make it in two marches. Accordingly next morning I started with my Aide-de-camp and a party, consisting of one gun under Captain Drury, forty men of C School Company, in waggons under Major Smith, and twenty of French's scouts. We had a terrible march, in the face of a regular blizzard of wind and hail the whole way, with not a tree or a bush to break the force of the wind. It was fearfully cold, and we had constantly to dismount and walk to restore our circulation. We halted half-way, but could not make a fire, and so had to do without our hot tea.

We reached the Crossing at about 4 p.m., and found it all safe, not having been troubled by the rebels. There were a few houses on our side of the river, one of them being inhabited by a Mr. Clarke and his wife. He had been in charge of the ferry, which took its name from him. On the other side of the river there was a telegraph station, the wire being carried over the river by means of tall spars, one on each side.

The south branch of the Saskatchewan is here about 200 yards broad with a powerful current running at the rate of about four miles an hour, high banks, and a wide deep border of the thickest and stickiest of mud on each side, in which were embedded large boulders and huge blocks of ice.

We found the scow* half sunk, and the wire rope in possession of Mr. Clarke, he having taken it down for safety.

After a Spartan supper, we passed the night as best we

*A roughly built flat-bottomed ferry boat, large enough to carry horses and carts as well as men.

could on the floor of Mr. Clarke's kitchen—my Aide-de-camp, Major Smith, Captains Drury, Scott and myself. There was barely room for us to lay down, but the crowding made us all the warmer, which was what we wanted.

The men were placed in two stone-built houses close by.

A small infantry piquet was posted, and three or four mounted scouts patrolled the neighbourhood all night. The main body camped about fourteen miles off, after a hard and disagreeable march.

The next day, the 17th of April, the main body arrived about 11 a.m., and I inspected Boulton's scouts, who had joined it the day before. They were armed with Winchester repeating rifles and were suitably clothed, being mounted on wiry, servicable horses, some of them having English saddles, and the men looked, as they proved to be, very fit.

Our camp was on high ground on a sort of plateau running back for miles from the high bank of the river, almost to Humboldt. The ground on the West side was similar, but higher than on our side.

The next day it snowed and was very cold. I sent Melgund out with Boulton and his scouts to reconnoitre, with French as a guide, as he knew something of the country about. Not long after, a scout came back for a wagon to bring in three Indian prisoners they had captured.

The wagon was sent and in due course the party arrived. The Indians, in war paint, looked rather scared and comical as they swayed and bobbed about to the jolting of their chariot, and they reminded me a good deal of fifth of November guys. It appeared that when sighted they had taken cover in some thick brush which covered the high sloping river bank for miles, along which they ran, the scouts riding along the top of the slope. At last the fugitives finding themselves blown, made a stand back to back in a gully. Melgund was unwilling to shoot them if he could help it, and two or three of the scouts who could speak a little Indian volunteered to go down to them. The Indians declined however, to surrender, and Melgund was going to take strong measures, when French pluckily walked down unarmed, and, in spite of them covering him with their rifles, insisted on shaking hands with them. They then smoked a pipe to-

gether, and finally walked up with French, and surrendered themselves to Melgund and his party. One of them carried a Winchester repeating rifle and the other two had shot guns loaded with ball. They proved to be the two sons and brother-in-law of "White Cap", a Sioux chief, whose reserve was near Saskatoon, a settlement some miles up the river, and who had joined Riel, as they said by compulsion. The prisoners stated that they had been to their reserve, and were returning to Batoche when captured. They told us that Riel had 500 half-breeds and 250 Indians at Batoche. The three prisoners were handed over to Boulton's care. I afterwards sent one of these men back to Batoche, giving him several copies of a proclamation in French to the effect that any "Metis"—"French half-breed"—or Indian abandoning Riel would be protected and pardoned, and that we were only warring against Riel, his council and principal accomplices. It was explained to the savage that he was to scatter these about, and that if he returned with information, especially about the white prisoners Riel was known to have at Batoche, he would be rewarded. I did not expect much good from this proceeding but thought it worth trying. I may add that the man never did return, and on the taking of Batoche, his body was about the first we came across, lying on his back in full war-paint, with a bullet through his head, whether shot by us or Riel I cannot say.

Late this evening a telegram arrived via Humboldt from Irvine, dated the 15th, stating that he had received information that a war party of 300 hostile Battleford Indians, all mounted, was approaching me or going to Batoche from the North; also again warning me of what good shots and prairie fighters I had to contend with, adding that that was not all, as the Indians were rising all about us, and fairly well armed. He also reiterated his opinion that our forces were too small to act separately.

I sent over the news about the Indian braves to Melgund, telling him to be on the alert. As for myself I considered it was only another "Nor'-Wester" and after visiting the outposts, I retired calmly to my blankets and was not disturbed.

The 10th Regiment Royal Grenadiers, a Toronto city regiment, 250 strong, one of the best in the Canadian Militia,

joined us during the day, the 18th of April, having, with a few extra wagons to assist the men in marching, covered the distance from Qu'appelle, 198 miles, over a wet and heavy trail, in nine days, including one day's halt. This was a highly creditable performance for men quite unaccustomed to long marching. This regiment was one of those that had undergone the great hardships in crossing the gaps in the Canadian Pacific Railway already alluded to. It was fortunate enough, among its many good officers, to have two old regulars at its head, viz., Lieutenant-Colonel Grasett, commanding, who had served in the 100th with Boulton, and Major Dawson, who had served in the 7th, both of whom proved themselves to be excellent and reliable officers.

This addition made our force 800 strong in round numbers.

A fatigue party under Captain Haig, afterwards assisted by Bedson, was engaged putting the ferry in order; and here I had another proof of the great handiness and skill of some of my militia men. The scow had to be repaired, the wire rope straightened, spliced, fastened on both sides of the river, and tightened, for which a platform and rough windlass had to be constructed; a wharf also had to be made, and a road down the steep wooded banks to it. All this had to be, and was done in very cold weather, with no tools except axes and augers.

Late that night, the 19th April, Captain Bedson and Mr. Macdowall returned from Prince Albert via. Humboldt, having met with no adventures on the road, thus confirming me in my suspicions that the stories of couriers who had come with dispatches from Prince Albert about the dangers they had encountered were mostly "Nor'-Westers," and that there were not so many Indians wandering about as Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine seemed to think.

My brother-in-law, Mr. Doucet, of the Canadian Militia, and graduate of the Royal Military College, Kingston, arrived also, having met Bedson and Macdowall at Humboldt. This young officer, who was a civil engineer, gave up his employment and volunteered his services for the campaign, and having joined, I appointed him my second Aide-de-camp.

I had now good reason to believe that Riel had with him certainly not more than 500 half-breeds, the rest being

Indians, and that he had men on both sides of the river, so, after some consideration, I determined to divide my force, sending one-half of it across the river under Lieutenant-Colonel Montizambert, with Melgund as staff officer, to take the place I had intended for Otter's column.

We commenced early on the 20th crossing the left column, which consisted of;—

	Strength.
The 10th Royal Grenadiers, Lieutenant-Colonel Grasett commanding.	250
Two guns, Winnipeg Field Battery, Major Jarvis commanding. . .	50
Detachment from A Battery, Lieutenant Rivers commanding. . .	23
French's Scouts, Captain French commanding.	20
Detachment of Boulton's Scouts, under Sergeant Brown. . . .	30
	<hr/>
Total. . .	373

The crossing was not an easy matter, though we had two scows, having procured a second one from Saskatoon, the settlers there cheerfully giving it up for public service. These scows were worked by means of pulleys, running on wire rope, the current of the river being the motive power. It was hard work, and each crossing took some time. Melgund superintended the landing and camping on the other side.

Captain Bedson reported to me in writing that Colonel Irvine, after hearing my message, had stated that he considered it unwise to obey my directions to move out of Prince Albert, and this view was concurred in by his Staff Officer and others, the reason given being that they were short of ammunition. It was further stated by him that the Teton Sioux Indians were reported to be in the immediate neighbourhood, and waiting to attack the town if left unprotected.

I had heard before of these Teton Sioux, as Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine mentioned them in his telegram to Mr. Dewdney, which I intercepted at Humboldt, but I do not think they ever did much damage to anyone! I now determined to leave the Prince Albert force out of my calculations in forming the plans for attacking Batoche.

We heard during the day that Inspector Dickens²² of the Mounted Police with his men had arrived by boat at Battleford, having evacuated Fort Pitt, and that all the Hudson

Bay officials, and other whites there, with their wives and children, were prisoners in Big Bear's camp. On the 21st we finished crossing over the left column. My immediate command consisted of the following:—

	Rank and File.
90th regiment under Major Mackeand.	268
A Battery R.C.A., under Captain Peters.	82
C Company, Permanent Force under Major Smith.	40
Scouts, under Major Boulton.	50
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Total. . .	440

with Lieutenant-Colonel Houghton as Staff Officer.

During the day we tried a system of signalling between the two columns by bugle notes, long and short, suggested and carried out by Major Jarvis, commanding the Winnipeg Battery, and Captain Peters, commanding A Battery, which proved a perfect success.²³

Melgund reported that, having gone out with a small party reconnoitring, he had chased two of the enemy's Scouts some twelve miles in the direction of Batoche, but they got into a bluff, where a party of their own people were lying, and as his horses were dead-beat, and there was evidently a large force opposed to him, he halted and retired, the enemy showing no inclination to follow him.

We were now ready to advance, but we wanted forage, of which we required daily a large amount, having, including our transport teams, over 550 horses to feed. Happily a train of forage, etc., arrived on the 22nd April, and I resolved to push on next morning.

I arranged with Lieutenant-Colonel Montizambert that we were to start at the same hour, marching with the heads of our columns in line, and halting at the same hour. The scow, with a small party and the wire rope on board, would drop down the river between us, keeping in line with heads of the columns, and towing a small punt we had patched up for the occasion.

The next morning, the 23rd April, we marched as arranged. My advanced guard was formed as follows;— First, a line of Boulton's scouts, covering a front of half a mile;

then, about 300 yards in rear, the rest of the scouts on the trail, with a company of the 90th 300 yards in the rear of them. The head of the main body was again about 400 yards in rear of the advanced guards. I had a small guard with the ammunition wagons, but no rear guard, as most of the teamsters were armed, and quite able to defend themselves. I marched with my two Aides-de-camp in front of the formed body of scouts under Boulton.

After a march of eighteen miles we camped near a farmhouse belonging to a Mr. Macintosh, a few settlers' huts being scattered about. I sent Boulton with his scouts to reconnoitre well to the front, while we pitched camp. That evening I posted the piquets myself and again explained in detail to everyone concerned how their duties were to be carried out, which took me two or three hours.

On getting back to camp I found that Boulton had returned without seeing any of the enemy, but had come across traces of them at an empty house some four miles off, where there was some forage stored, and some carts at the door as though the rebels had been disturbed in an attempt to carry it off. As forage was still scarce with us, Lieutenant-Colonel Houghton had thought it advisable to secure this supply at once, and taking a party of scouts, a few of the 90th, and some carts, he had brought back the whole of the forage without being interfered with. Next morning, the 24th of April, we marched for "Dumont's Ferry." Having been warned that we had a nasty ravine to cross on our way, I directed Boulton to push his advanced scouts further ahead, and to extend them more. With my two Aides-de-camp and Captain Haig, A.G.M.G., accompanied by Mr. Macdowall, and followed by my trusty orderly Sergeant Back—who stuck to me like a leech the whole day—I took up my usual post in front of Boulton's formed scouts, Mr. Chambers, one of the war correspondents, riding with him on this occasion. After riding about five miles we met a mounted man who had been sent back to inform me that the scouts on the left of our trail had come across a camping place not long before vacated, the fires being still smouldering; that the number of fires and other signs indicated that at least 180 or 200 mounted men had camped there. We immediately galloped to the front,

and had scarcely gone 400 yards or 500 yards when two shots rang out, and we saw a party of about fifty mounted men close to a bluff about 500 yards to our left, who fired a volley at us, which, luckily, were aimed too high and rattled overhead among the trees. Boulton wheeled his men and charged at once, but the enemy turned and galloped into the ravine on their left, dismounting at the edge of the wood lining it, into which they disappeared. Boulton now sung out to his men to dismount, extend and lie down, but before they could complete those orders, the enemy opened fire and two men and horses were hit, and immediately after two more men were wounded. The rest threw themselves down and opened fire on the wood, the wounded men crawling in behind the line. The riderless horses of both sides were now galloping wildly about, some wounded ones laying struggling and kicking on the ground. The advanced scouts had galloped in and reinforced the extended line which gallantly and stubbornly kept the enemy—who had been strongly reinforced—from advancing. One Indian in full war paint, out of bravado, came dancing out and shouting his war cry and was immediately knocked over and fell in the open where the body remained all day. Amidst the rattle of the rifles and the pinging of the bullets we could hear the oaths and shouts of the excited “Metis” mingling with the war-whoops of the Indians, the sturdy scouts talking only with their Winchesters. I sent Captain Wise back to hurry up the main body. Just as he left me his horse was shot, but he was soon back on another one. The infantry advanced guard, under Captain Clarke of the 90th, soon arrived, and was extended on the right of the scouts, who remained on the extreme left. When the main body came up, under Lieutenant-Colonel Houghton and Major Mackeand, two more companies were extended to the right. The enemy still kept up a hot fire, wounding Captain Clarke and several men. The two guns now came into action, under command of Captain Peters, but the enemy were too well covered, and after a few rounds I withdrew them. Observing that the enemy was making a movement to our left, I sent a party under Major Boswell to a farmhouse on our left front. Their fire soon crumpled up this movement, and the enemy fell back up the creek and

again joined their centre, where having a series of rifle-pits, they made their principal stand. Our firing line now pushed on to the edge of the bank of the creek. Here we had a good many casualties, owing to the men unduly exposing themselves to get shots at the enemy, whose whereabouts could only be guessed at by the smoke of their rifles when fired, they never showing themselves at all. Lieutenant Ogilvie, of the artillery, ran his gun up by hand, and by depressing it managed to send several shells into the wood at the bottom of the ravine. Both he and his men exposed themselves without the slightest hesitation, but they could not stop the fire from the pits, and one of the gunners was killed. About this time the enemy's fire in our front slackened somewhat, and I suspected a movement was being made to our right. I had previously sent away my two Aides-de-camp with orders to extend three companies of the 90th under Captain Buchan and the detachment of C Company under Major Smith on our extreme right, and to post the remainder of the 90th near the extemporised field hospital as a reserve under Major Mackeand. Leaving the left under Major Boswell, who had displayed great coolness throughout, I galloped across to the right, where I could hear heavy firing, and saw large clouds of smoke rising. I found that the enemy, reinforced from their centre, were making a determined attempt to turn our right. They had set fire to the prairie and were advancing firing, under cover of the smoke which was rolling up towards us in thick clouds. I found both my Aides-de-camp in front with the other officers gallantly encouraging the men. One of the Aides-de-camp, Captain Doucet, and several of the men were wounded at this time. The fire was advancing rapidly and had already reached the edge of the wood in which we were extended, the heat preventing our men from advancing. Boulton, with a few of his scouts, and Bedson with some armed teamsters were now brought up to reinforce the right, and though the enemy was invisible, the whole line kept up a hot fire to their front, the disciplined men of C Company setting a good example by their steadiness. If anything had been required to keep the men steady at this rather critical moment, it would have been found in the extraordinarily composed and cool behaviour of William

Buchanan, a little bugler of the 90th, who, while calmly distributing ammunition along the line, kept calling out in his childish shrill voice, "Now, boys, who's for more cartridges?" Some of the teamsters under Bedson's directions had now provided themselves with long sticks, and, after a heavy fire from us which checked the enemy, they advanced and with great quiet pluck began to beat out the flames. Our line then pressed steadily forward through the smouldering flames and, splendidly led by Major Smith, Captain Buchan and the other officers, drove the enemy back, bluff by bluff, part of them flying up the ravine and part taking refuge behind a farmhouse. Just at this moment a gun which I ordered up arrived under Captain Drury, who cleverly dropped a shell right into the house, setting it on fire and dislodging the enemy, who bolted after their comrades and were seen no more. I then returned to the right. In passing some open ground we were fired at from the rifle pits in the centre of the enemy's line, one bullet passing through and seriously damaging my fur service cap, another grazing my horse Sam to his great surprise and disgust, and another wounding Captain Wise's fresh horse which fell, throwing his rider right under my horse's feet. Needless to say we did not linger on that spot. This was not the first time I had been saluted from this same spot, and I was afterward informed by Riel that I owed those delicate attentions to his Commander-in-Chief Gabriel Dumont, who had been good enough to swear he would shoot me. I found the enemy still keeping up a fire from their centre, now become their right. Observing that a good many heads were being bobbed to the pings of the bullets, I explained to those near me that this bobbing looked undignified, and was perfectly useless, as the ping was only heard when the bullet had passed. This remark was transmogrified into the following delicious "bull" in the newspaper accounts, "The General told the boys not to bob at the ping of the bullets, and pointing to his fur cap which had just been shot through, he exclaimed, 'Why boys, if I had bobbed just now I should have had my brains knocked out!'"

About this time Melgund and a party of the 10th Grenadiers under Captain Mason arrived, and were extended on

our right centre; and soon the enemy's fire began to slacken considerably and then cease, and they must have most of them retired up to the ravine in rear of the wood as we soon after caught sight of a body of men, part mounted and part on foot, disappearing in the distance in the direction of Batoche. But we soon found to our cost that some were still left in the rifle-pits, as one of our men was wounded by a shot from there.

Captain Peters commanding the artillery, now asked permission to head a party of volunteers and try to dislodge these troublesome "Pitties," which I granted. The party consisted of a few dismounted artillery men and some of the 90th under Captain Ruttan. They advanced into the ravine, at the bottom of which they were checked by the fire of the enemy, who, as usual, were invisible. Here they were joined by some more of the 90th under Lieutenant Swinford, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Houghton, who had been sent with orders, and attached himself to the party, and my Aide-de-camp, Captain Wise, who had obtained my leave to go. At the same time another small party advanced in another direction to create a diversion. After making several gallant attempts all had to retire with the loss of three men killed and five wounded, one of the latter being Captain Swinford, who died of his wound. I refused to let them make a second attempt, then, and took Captain Drury with one gun, supported by a part of C Company under Major Smith, across the ravine to the left, to try and take the pits in reverse, but with no apparent effect, as one of the gunners was wounded and Major Boulton, who accompanied me, had his horse shot under him. I brought them back and contented myself with detailing a party, well under cover to watch the place where the pits were. My gallant and ever-ready Aide-de-camp Wise, was now put hors de combat by a shot in the ankle, received while trying to ascertain if the enemy had gone.

Though we could not get at the men in the wood we necessarily did great execution among their horses and ponies, which had been fastened in the wood near the rifle-pits, which accounted for the dismounted men we saw bolting with the mounted party.

By about 3 p.m., with the exception of an occasional shot from the pits, all firing had ceased; the enemy had fled, and the fight was virtually over. Captain Mason, of the 10th, and some other officers and men were now very anxious to be allowed to again try and rush the rifle-pits, but I had already lost too many of my citizen soldiers, and did not think it advisable, for several reasons, to risk losing more, as we certainly should have done in a second attempt. The tenants of the pits were evidently reduced to a small number, and could do little, if any, more damage. Moreover, I could not help having a feeling of admiration and respect for their stubborn defence when deserted by their comrades, so I refused, and shortly after their fire ceased altogether.

I must now refer to the proceedings of the other column. On hearing the firing on our side Melgund, with the concurrence of Lieutenant-Colonel Montizambert, gave orders to make a secure lager with the wagons, and moved the force down to the river bank, leaving a small party with the wagons. The firing becoming heavier they moved down the river, and as they got nearly opposite the scene of action—which was not visible to them—they saw somebody on our side gesticulating and shouting.²⁴ Melgund went down to the river-side and though he could not make out clearly what was said, he rightly concluded that they were wanted to cross, and immediately set to work to do so.* The scow unfortunately was not in its proper position, having been sent early that morning to our camp for forage for the left column. It was then on its way down, and the men were sent along the river to hurry it down. When it did arrive it had to be unloaded before the crossing could commence. The unwieldy scow, which could barely hold sixty men, instead of having the assistance of the wire rope and the current, had now to be laboriously propelled with oars roughly improvised and made with axes by men totally unused to such work, the current being an obstruction instead of an aid. Added to this was the difficulty of embarking and disembarking, owing to the deep mud, boulders, and blocks of ice, and to the absence of a wharf and roadway down and up the steep

*We were unfortunately unable to use our bugle signalling, as I could spare neither Captain Peters nor a bugler.

wooded banks some 100 feet high on each side. Yet with all these difficulties to surmount, 250 men and two guns with their waggons fully horsed were crossed over a wide and rapid river without an accident, principally owing to the indomitable energy and determination of the officers and men, and especially of Lord Melgund and Major Jarvis, commanding the guns of the Winnipeg Battery. A force of regulars could not have done better, if so well.

As already stated the first to arrive was Melgund himself, with a company of the 10th Grenadiers, and Fiennes, of French's scouts, as orderly officer, having been guided to the scene of operations by Captain Haig. In superintending the extension of this company, Melgund was very nearly potted by a shot from a long range rifle, of which the rebels had several, and Fienne's horse was killed by a shot from the same spot as he was returning from carrying an order.

Later on came more companies of the Grenadiers under Lieutenant-Colonel Grasett, and the two guns under Major Jarvis, who Melgund told me had worked like a Trojan. By that time the affair was virtually over.

At the beginning of the affair Captain Bedson and Mr. Secretan formed a sort of zareba, behind a small wood about 600 yards in the rear, with some of the waggons, where a temporary Field Hospital was established under the direction of Dr. Orton, the senior medical man, who was ably assisted by Assistant-Surgeon Whiteford, of the 90th Regiment, Dr. J. Grant, Artillery, and Dr. Rolston, of the scouts, in attending to the wounded. The band of the 90th did most excellent service in bringing in the wounded, not hesitating to expose themselves to the fire of the enemy in so doing.

I had intended camping on the spot, but found it was not a suitable one, so sent Melgund and Haig to select a piece of ground as near as possible. They selected one about 400 or 500 yards to our left, near the river, to which the wounded men and waggons were sent at once. Shortly after, amidst a storm of snow and sleet the whole force moved off, the Grenadiers remaining extended along the crest of the ravine until we had pitched camp. As they were moving off to the camp, a party of about forty mounted men suddenly showed themselves on the opposite side of the ravine. The

10th faced about and advanced, but the party turned and disappeared, and no more was seen or heard of them. It turned out that they had been sent as a reinforcement, but arrived a little too late.

Thus ended our first brush with the enemy. If not a complete victory, it was certainly not a defeat, and the result did not tend to encourage the Indians to hurry on to join Riel. Personally I was fairly satisfied with the affair. My men had borne their baptism of fire well; and if they had not—as was only to be expected—displayed the dash and rapidity of movement of regular troops in their first essay of war, they had clearly evinced great staying power and dogged courage. In fact they had held their own against an attempt at surprise and had driven the enemy, little inferior in number to themselves, and better skilled in the mode of fighting required, out of a position carefully selected and prepared by themselves beforehand. We had under 400 men actually engaged, and the enemy had about 300. Our casualties amounted to fifty, including five officers. Of these, ten, including one officer, were killed or died of their wounds. We afterwards ascertained that the Rebels had eleven killed or died of their wounds, and eighteen wounded, besides three Indians left dead on the field.

My narrative ended in the last number at the point where my small army was about to camp after the affair at Fish creek. It was a terrible night, blowing and snowing hard, and we had great difficulty in pitching our camp. Posting the piquets was no very easy work either, owing to the numerous coolees and bluffs scattered about.*

However, with Melgund's assistance, I managed it satisfactorily. Besides the piquets—four in number—we had as usual a small party of scouts, mounted, patrolling round the camp every hour. Melgund and I visited the outposts together after midnight, and found them all very alert. The morning of the 25th broke tolerably fair. The wounded were all doing well, including the amputation cases of which unfortunately there were several. The dead were buried early

*In North-West phraseology a "bluff" means a small wood or copse, and a "coolee" the same with a small pool of water in its midst.

in the day, I myself reading the service, no clergymen having joined us up to that time. I was much relieved by hearing, in the course of that day, of Otter's safe arrival at Battleford without fighting, and that he found all its people safe. This good news, combined with the arrival in camp of a small herd of the enemy's cattle which had been "rounded up" by some of Bedson's men and the American war correspondent, greatly assisted the officers and myself in dispelling a slight gloom which had overcast our camp since the engagement, principally owing to the sudden loss of some of their comrades, a contingency of war which had been brought home somewhat unexpectedly to my untried citizen soldiers. I now determined to reunite my force and attack Batoche, on the eastern side of the river, and gave orders accordingly. Melgund had never liked my plan of dividing the force which—though I believe it, as regards the enemy, to have been a good one—I now saw was more suitable for a force of regular troops, than for a body of perfectly untried and almost untrained militia, however willing and plucky they might be. Once having decided on recrossing the left column, Melgund set to work at it with a will, assisted by Captain Haig, and it was safely accomplished in two days. Melgund reassumed his position as chief-of-the-staff, and that night when visiting the outposts he was requested by an amiable sentry to "throw up his hand" and say who he was. On his doing the latter, he was told to advance and show himself. The sentry, with rifle at "the ready," looked him over, and turning his head said in a hoarse whisper, "All right Bill, it's only a orficer." It appeared "Bill" was lying down, close by, ready to fire if his comrade missed. Melgund mentioned that that was not the usual way to receive grand rounds, and passed on. About 2 o'clock in the morning the camp was aroused by three or four shots fired from the right piquet. I was soon out and mounted, and with Melgund and two or three scouts galloped off to the spot. The sentries declared that they had fired at two mounted men who would not answer their challenge. After patrolling all round and seeing nobody, we returned to camp and turned the force in. Next morning we found the sentries were quite right. A man who was in charge of a train having lost his way, had halted his waggons

and ridden off with one of his men to try and find the trail. When challenged, not feeling sure it was our camp, he did not answer, and when fired at they turned and bolted, spending the rest of the night most uncomfortably in a small coolee. This alarm roused one of Boulton's men who had been very badly wounded and was in fact dying. The poor fellow half-rose, and, calling for his horse and rifle, fell back dead. I visited the scene of our late fight, and after examining the locality, I felt thankful that my scouts had been so advanced and extended as to have caused the enemy to disclose themselves prematurely, for had they allowed our main body to get well into the ravine before opening fire on us, I fear greatly that with my raw troops the consequences might have been most disastrous.* And that this was their intention we afterward learnt by a report from Gabriel Dumont, found among Riel's papers captured at Batoche.

The rifle-pits were cleverly constructed, and so situated that their defenders were quite covered from our fire, both rifle and cannon. We found our two dead untouched, and had them carried back to camp. We also found one Indian lying dead half in and half out of one of the pits, and another lying a little in front, besides the one shot at the commencement of the affair; also fifty-five dead horses and ponies. The Rev. W. Gordon joined us here as chaplain to the 90th.

We remained encamped at Fish Creek waiting for the arrival of the steamer Northcote with supplies and a few men, which ought soon to arrive. I was the more anxious for the arrival of the steamer as I wanted it to convey the wounded to Saskatoon, a small settlement some seventeen miles up the river, the inhabitants of which had kindly and thoughtfully offered their houses and services for them. I utilized this unwished-for halt by practising the men at field drill, skirmishing, advancing and retiring, etc., and reconnoitring daily towards Batoche. In these reconnaissances only once did we come across any of the enemy, a party of them were in a house near the river some five miles from our camp. Their outlying scout caught sight of us and gave the alarm. They rushed out and galloped off with such a start

*See the excellent military sketch of Fish Creek, drawn on the ground by Captain Haig A.Q.M.G., and given in the last number.

that it was useless our following. Their dinner, consisting of chunks of under-done beef, which they had evidently just begun, served to allay the appetites of some of our scouts who were hungry and not too particular. Though we did not see much of the enemy in our reconnaissances, we often saw their cattle horses, ponies and sometimes fowl, and always brought some of them back with us; and we must, on these occasions, have looked like "moss-troopers" of old, returning from a raid. The cattle were converted into rations for the men, the horses and ponies handed over to the mounted corps, and the fowls sent to the hospitals for the wounded. The end of April drew near, and there were no signs of the steamer; so acting on the advice of Brigade-Surgeon Orton, I ordered some waggons to be made ready to carry the wounded to Saskatoon. This order was most admirably carried out by Captain Bedson, who had the hides of the captured cattle dressed and then fastened up hammock fashion, but stretched tight in each waggon. A light frame work of willow wands was added, over which some strong canvas was fixed; the general result being a very fair substitute for an ambulance. On the first of May I received information that, owing to the lowness of the water, the steamer could not arrive for four or five days, so I sent off the wounded in the improvised ambulances, under the care of Drs. Orton, Rolston, Moore and Willoughby—the latter being a resident of Saskatoon, who had come into camp, and who had been of great service. Boulton and his scouts formed the escort. I may state here that this convoy arrived safely at Saskatoon, the wagon ambulances proving a perfect success. The wounded had borne their long journey of forty miles well, and were handed over to Surgeon-Major Douglas, who had paddled alone in a canoe from the Landing, a distance of about 200 miles. Brigade-Surgeon Orton and the other medical man returned at once to Fish Creek. The next day Deputy Surgeon-General Roddick arrived there, and took over medical charge, having brought with him an admirable staff and medical outfit. Dr. Roddick, who had been in our Army, proved to be a most skilful, energetic officer. Under his care all the wounded recovered, except two who were mortally hurt. He was ably assisted by his staff, and an

excellent nurse, who was as skilful as she was kind and pleasant. Nurse Miller, as she was called, was simply adored by all her patients. After sending off the wounded, I despatched Bedson up the river with fifty empty waggons to meet the steamer and lighten her of some of her cargo.

The following is a rough return of the troops at my disposal in the North-West Territories, and where they were on, or about the 2nd of May, in addition to Otter's and my own column, whose composition and numbers have already been given.

MAJOR-GENERAL STRANGE'S COMMAND.

At and about Calgary and Edmonton.

	<i>Strength.</i>
Winnipeg Light Infantry Battalion, Lt.-Col. Osborne Smith, C.M.G.	336
9th Battalion (French Canadian, raised for the occasion), Lieut.-Col.	
Amyot, M.P.	250
65th Battalion (French Canadian), Lt.-Col. Ouimet, M.P.	340
Stewart's Rangers (raised for the occasion), Major Stewart.	50
Mounted Police, Major Steele.	67

SWIFT CURRENT.

7th Battalion Fusiliers, Lieutenant-Colonel W. Williams.	350
Halifax Provisional Battalion, Lieutenant-Col. Bremner.	350
Midlander Provisional Battalion, Lieutenant-Col. A. Williams, M.P. .	340
Land Surveyor's Scouts (raised for the occasion), Captain Dennis. .	50

QU'APPELLE (TROY).

91st Battalion (newly raised), Lieutenant-Col. Scott, M.P.	522
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FORT QU'APPELLE.

York and Simcoe Provisional Battalion, Lieut.-Col. O'Brien, M.P. .	60
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TOUCHWOOD.

Cavalry School Troop, Lieut.-Col. F. Turnbull.	40
Winnipeg Cavalry, Captain Knight.	40

HUMBOLDT.

Governor General's Body Guard, Lieut.-Col. Denison.	70
Total.	2895

On the 5th of May, the long expected steamer arrived after a tedious journey, most of which seemed to have been made on land. All the steamers on this river are stern-wheelers, and have four strong spars fastened, two on each side of the bow, by a sort of hinge. These spars are kept triced up until the vessel runs on a shoal or sand-bank—which are many and shifting—when they are lowered and the vessel is forced over the obstacle, made to walk over it as it were. The steamer, besides supplies, brought two companies,²⁵ about eighty men, of the so-called Midlander Battalion, formed from several Midland Battalions, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel A. Williams, M.P. A gatling gun in charge of a Captain Howard, late United States Army, an agent of the Gatling Company, and Lieutenant-Colonel Van Straubenzee, whom I was glad to see. He had served in the Crimea with the Old Buffs, and having retired was then serving as Deputy-Adjutant-General in the Canadian Militia, and had now come to join my force. Dr. Roddick had also come in the vessel from Saskatoon to report to me. Having discussed and settled with him the different medical arrangements, he left the same afternoon, taking with him in a waggon my Aide-de-Camp, Captain Doucet, whose wound he considered of a serious nature, the bone in his opinion, having been shattered. This proved to be the case, and he practically lost the use of his right arm. On that day I also received the news of Lieutenant-Colonel Otter's engagement on the 2nd of May, with Poundmaker and his Indians, at Cut-Knife Creek,²⁶ about thirty miles from Battleford. The movement which led to the engagement was made without my orders, though Lieutenant-Colonel Otter had the approval of Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney, to whom however he should not have applied on such a purely military matter. Otter's force numbered about 325 men with two seven pounders and one gatling, the enemy being estimated at about 200. After six hours engagement, the trails of both guns having been broken, finding his position not tenable at night, and considering the object of his reconnaissance accomplished, he concluded to return at once to Battleford, in case a counter attack might be made on that place. His casualties amounted to eight killed and fourteen wounded,

including one officer, Lieutenant O. C. Pelletier, 9th Battalion, doing duty with the artillery. Though this affair could not be considered a success, it reflected great credit on the untried officers and men engaged in it. The retirement—a difficult operation, especially with raw troops—appeared to have been remarkably well carried out by Lieutenant-Colonel Otter, who in his despatch wrote very highly of the conduct of both men and officers, naming some especially, in addition to his personal staff, namely; Lieutenant Sears, 38th Staffordshire Regiment, doing duty with C Company School Corps, and Brigade-Major and Captain Mutton, 2nd Queen's Own Regiment, Brigade Quarter-master.

On the 6th of May, all preparations were made for marching on the morrow. I formed the infantry into a Brigade, giving the command of it to Lieutenant-Colonel Van Straubenzee, with Captain Young of the Winnipeg Battery as Brigade-Major, a most energetic and zealous officer. I directed Captain Haig to make the upper deck of the steamer Northcote bullet-proof, which was done as well as was possible with the means and time at his command, and I placed a small force on board with a view to the vessel taking part in the attack. The force consisted of the following:—Thirty-one rank and file, two officers C Company School Corps, Captain Bedson, my aide-de-camp, Captain Wise, who, though better, was to my great loss, incapacitated from walking or riding, three sick officers, Dr. Moore and Mr. Pringle, medical staff, several men of supply and transport services, Mr. G. Ham, a newspaper correspondent, and some settlers returning to their homes, amounting with some of the crew to about fifty combatants, the whole under command of Major Smith, whose orders were to anchor the first night abreast of our camp, remain there the next day, and on the morning of the 9th drop down and meet the column at about 8, just above Batoche. On the 7th we marched and halted at Gabriel Dumont's Ferry, where the steamer also anchored. Just as we were leaving Fish Creek camp, we were joined by Surgeon-Major J. Bell with Surgeon Gravely, Assistant-Surgeon Wright, and six dressers, a most welcome addition to our medical staff. My force was now nearly 700 strong and in excellent spirits. As I had learnt there were

some nasty places to pass on the river trail, I rode out with some scouts to the east, accompanied by Mr. Reid, the Paymaster of the Midlanders, a surveyor by profession, who had assisted in laying out allotments, etc., in this very neighbourhood. With his assistance I marked out a route for next day's march which would bring us on the Humboldt trail about five or six miles from Batoche. On the morrow we marched and halted close to the trail on some rising ground with a small lake on one flank and the open prairie on the other. Leaving Van Straubenzee to pitch camp I rode forward with Boulton and his scouts to within a mile of Batoche, driving in some of the enemy's scouts, and I selected a site for camp about three miles from our present one, in case I should want it next day. In the evening I assembled the commanding officers and told them what I proposed doing. Captain Freer of our Staffordshire Regiment, doing duty with B Infantry School, joined us here to act as my aide-de-camp. He like his disabled predecessors, was a graduate of that excellent and valuable institution, the Royal Military College at Kingston, Canada, and proved most useful to me.

Next morning, the 9th of May, we started at about 6 a.m., leaving our camp standing with a small guard to assist the teamsters in case of an attack, which however, I did not think likely to occur. We advanced with our scouts well ahead, two of the guns and a gatling being near the head of the column. As we got near the river, much to my annoyance we heard a rattling fire and the steamer's whistle, showing that the latter was already engaged. We fired a gun to let them know that we were at hand, and pushed on. When we arrived where the trail turned to follow the river there was no sign of the steamer, but we could hear her whistle going and continuous firing, and trusted all was well with her.

On ahead we saw some houses, and some men running wildly about. A round or two from the gatling, and a few shells, set fire to one of the houses and scattered the men, who, after a few long shots at us, disappeared behind what was apparently a church with a large wooden house close beside it. From the side of the latter a few shots were fired at us as we advanced. This was soon stopped by the fire of

the gatling, which then turned its fire on the house, luckily without effect, as we caught sight of a white flag being waved from a window. I stopped the fire and rode up to the house which I found to be full of people; three or four Roman Catholic priests, some sisters of mercy and a number of women and children, the latter being all half-breeds. They were naturally alarmed, and having reassured them we continued our advance. Our scouts, who had cautiously advanced beyond the church, were at once checked by a fire from a sort of low brush about 200 yards or 300 yards ahead, and in accordance with my orders they galloped back and formed up behind the church. The 10th Grenadiers were now brought up and two companies extended and pushed forward to the edge of the ravine in front, two more companies being extended near the church. The guns and gatling were now brought up and opened fire, the former on the houses in Batoche and the latter on a thick scrub on the opposite side of the river, from whence a galling fire was being kept up by a totally invisible enemy. Finding the gun detachments and horses were suffering, I directed them to retire, and as they were doing so, a heavy fire was suddenly opened upon them from a bluff just below. This fire was momentarily stopped by the gatling, which was well and gallantly handled by Captain Howard under the direction of Lieutenant River's Canadian Artillery. But the fire soon recommenced, killing a horse and wounding one of the gunners working the gatling, which I ordered also to retire. The wounded man was pluckily brought in by my new aide-de-camp, Captain Freer, assisted by gunner Coyne of B Battery. Leaving Melgund on the left, I rode over to the church, and found the extended line holding its ground under a heavy fire from a bluff in front. I brought the gatling round the church, and Captain Howard made a dashing attempt to flank the bluff, but could not succeed, as the enemy were safely ensconced in well-made rifle-pits. Returning to the left, I found Captain Peters had made a gallant and vigorous attempt, with a few of the garrison artillery, to drive the enemy out of the bluff below, but had failed and had retired, leaving a wounded man behind. I directed Lieutenant-Colonel Williams to advance the Midlanders down a small gully which lay between the

bluff held by the enemy and the cemetery, so as to distract the attention of the enemy. This was well and boldly done, and Peters, with some of his men, assisted by Dr. Codd, of the 90th, gallantly went down with a stretcher and brought the man back without further loss; but the poor man was dead. Our wounded were placed temporarily in the church, where the priests and sisters did all they could to help the doctors. It was now getting late, and I saw that, though we were holding our own, it would not be advisable to risk an attempt to advance through the thick cover which surrounded the village, which was now swarming with the enemy, reinforced by the party who had been engaged attacking the steamer, and I had to decide as to where we should camp for the night.²⁷ Most, if not all of my senior officers were of the opinion that we were not strong enough and ought to retire to our last camp and await reinforcements. I differed from them. I considered, though I would have been glad of a few more men, that we were strong enough as we were, and a few days' delay before actually forcing the enemy's position would only render our men more fit and anxious for it, and we could afford to expend more ammunition than the enemy. Moreover even if reinforcements were found to be necessary, we could await them more advantageously where we were, for I felt certain that should we retire, we should be followed up, and our retirement might chance to become a rout. Even if we fell back unmolested, the fact of our retiring at all would be made the most of all over the north-west territories, and a general rising would probably take place. So I determined to hold on at all hazards where we were, even to keeping with us the wounded, whom I at one time thought of sending back. At the same time I thought it wise to prepare for possibilities, and wrote orders to be sent by telegraph from Humboldt, to close up the troops on our lines of communication, so as to be at hand if required. I also wrote a despatch to the Minister of Militia on the state of affairs, which I determined to send by Lord Melgund. He was naturally averse to leave me as I was to lose him at such a moment; but I explained to him my reasons for wishing it, and he departed that afternoon on the understanding that I was to telegraph to

him at Winnipeg if matters became worse, and he was then to return with any troops he might find there. I sent back Mr. Secretan with Boulton and his scouts to strike our camp and bring everything up to us. This was done very quickly and a zareba was formed with the waggons on a piece of open ground about a quarter of a mile back from the church. Towards evening the troops were gradually withdrawn, some of the enemy following them up until checked by a heavy fire from the zareba. A few of them kept up a desultory long-range fire for a short time, killing two horses and wounding one man in the zareba. As darkness fell all firing ceased. We were a little anxious about the steamer as we could hear no whistling, and to let them know on board that we had not retired we sent up a rocket, which, by-the-way, nearly caused a stampede among our horses. The force had behaved well, the officers setting a good example by their coolness, Van Straubenzee and his Brigade-Major Young being always to the front, and Melgund, Haig and Freer being of the greatest use to me. Piquets were posted and a trench made round the zareba. No tents were pitched except for the wounded, as all the horses were inside, and except for a little rain the weather was fine. The men lay down, with their arms, along the four sides of the zareba after a hasty supper. Our casualties for the day were two men killed and ten wounded, including Captain Mason, 10th Grenadiers. Next morning, the 10th May, we were under arms at dawn, but all was quiet, and after an early breakfast, I moved out part of the infantry; but we were not able to take up our positions of yesterday, as the enemy was in greater force, and now held the high ground about the cemetery and the ground in front of the church. Some of them, apparently Indians from their cries, had taken post at the end of a point of land below the cemetery, to answer which we had to send a party down to the edge of the river. The infantry were placed in as advanced positions as possible to engage the new positions taken up by the enemy. During the day A Battery had some practise at some houses on the opposite bank, and the two guns of the Winnipeg Battery shelled the cemetery and some rifle-pits. A body of mounted men, fifty in number, called the land surveyor's scouts, under

the command of Captain Dennis, joined us that afternoon—a most useful, able body of well-mounted men, all more or less surveyors by profession—and did right good service. That afternoon, we constructed, out of sight of the enemy, some trenches and isolated pits which would enfilade their usual advance when they followed our men up in the evening. Just before that time I placed some men in these pits and trenches armed with Martini-Henrys. When the advanced parties withdrew they were followed us usual by the enemy, who were speedily driven back by this unexpected flank fire. After the enemy had retired, two shots—evidently long range, unaimed shots—struck the camp, one killing a horse, the other, oddly enough, striking a waggon on which was my looking glass and before which I was shaving, after which all was quiet for the night. Our casualties for that day were one killed and five wounded.

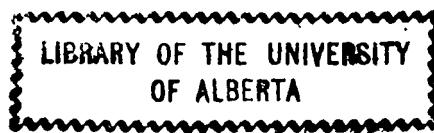
Having heard that there was a large piece of open prairie to the north-east of Batoche, I sent out during the day, Captain French with some scouts to ascertain if such was the case. On his return he reported that it was so, and I resolved to make a strong mounted reconnaissance next day in that direction, with a view to preparing for our final attack, for which I saw our men were getting nearly fit, the retirement this evening having been much steadier and our casualties for the day less.

The next morning, the 11th of May, having seen the infantry under Van Straubenzee take up their position and "open the ball," I started off with Boulton and his scouts and the gatling to reconnoitre the prairie ground said to be north of the village. As we were leaving we met a party carrying on a stretcher one of the Roman Catholic priests, who had been wounded in the thigh by a shot from the rebels fired into the house where he was sitting. The poor man bore the pain with great courage and patience. He was sent off to Saskatoon, and, I am glad to say, eventually quite recovered under Dr. Roddick's treatment. Instead of taking the regular trail, I made a detour through the wood, which was inclined to be marshy, but I thought it possible the enemy might have defences on the trail. We soon came out on the plain, which appeared nearly two miles long and some

thousand yards broad, with a slight ridge down the centre. We soon saw men moving about near the edge of the woods on the river side of the plain, and a few shots were fired at us. I advanced the gatling to the ridge, supported by some dismounted scouts, and soon drew a smart fire from them. We could see with our glasses that the enemy had a series of rifle-pits all along the edge of those woods, and numbers of them were running up between the woods and disappearing into the pits. Evidently they were prepared for an attack in this direction. Leaving the gatling in action I galloped off with my aide-de-camp, Boulton and a few scouts after two mounted men who were watching us on our right. They got away in some woods, and on our return we captured a man on foot coming out of a small wood close to us. He was unarmed and declared he was the priests' man, and, though an Indian, was in European clothes. He was sent to camp, and turned out to be a full-blown rebel. We also captured some cattle and ponies which we took back to camp with us. After continuing our fire on the pits for some time we returned to camp. On going to the front I found that we had more than regained our lost ground, my reconnaissance having drawn most of the enemy to the rifle-pits in our front. A party of Midlanders, under Lieutenant-Colonel Williams's command, finding the fire slacken from the Indians' post below the cemetery, and led by him, gallantly rushed it, the Indians bolting and leaving behind them some blankets and a dummy which they had used for drawing our fire. A battery shelled the cemetery, and the rifle-pits below, and the Winnipeg Battery shelled a house on the opposite side of the river which was flying Riel's flag. In the evening, the advanced parties retired unmolested, not even a long-range shot being fired into the camp. Our casualties for the day amounted to only four slightly wounded, including one officer, Captain Manly, 10th Grenadiers. Our men were now beginning to show more dash, and that night I came to the conclusion that it was time to make our decisive attack.

The next morning, the 12th of May, I left with all my mounted men, one gun of A Battery, and the gatling, for the plain. Before starting I arranged with Van Straubenzee that as soon as he heard us well engaged he was to move off, and,

having taken up yesterday's position, push on towards the village. I should, as soon as I had drawn the enemy to the rifle-pits, gallop back and join his attack. I took the same route as yesterday, and on reaching the plain dismounted some of the scouts, and with them, the gun and the gatling engaged the rifle-pits which were soon filled with the enemy. In the middle of all this we saw a man riding furiously towards us, waving something white. I rode forward to meet him, and found it was one of Riel's white prisoners, Mr. Ashley, a civil surveyer. He handed me a letter which he said Riel had written and sent to me. I opened it and found it to the effect that if I massacred his women and children, he would massacre the prisoners. As I supposed he referred to our shelling the houses, I at once wrote in answer that we were most averse to injuring women and children, and that if he would put them all in one place or house, and let me know the exact locality no shot or shell would be fired at it. Just then another prisoner, a Mr. Jackson, came up on foot, having been sent by Riel with a duplicate of the letter brought by Ashley. The latter, in a few hurried words, told me that the prisoners were all, at that moment, in a dark cellar in one of the houses, the trap-door of which was kept closed by heavy weights, and that Jackson and himself had been taken out specially to carry the letter, and that they were being rather roughly treated. He then described the position of the house, and honourably and gallantly went back with my answer, fearing, if he did not, his comrades in misfortune might suffer. The other man declined to return. I now proposed to retire, first pouring in a heavy fire with some dismounted men and the gatling, while the gun and the mounted men withdrew covered from the enemy's sight by the ridge. The dismounted men held on for a short time, unfortunately losing one of their number, Lieutenant Kippen, of the Land Surveyor's Scouts. When the whole party was mounted we went as rapidly as possible back to our camp. Then I found, to my intense surprise and annoyance, that owing to a strong wind blowing towards us, our firing had not been heard and the infantry had not moved out of camp. I am afraid on that occasion I lost both my temper and my head. I hurried off alone to the church to try and see what



the enemy was about. Just as I got near it a fire was opened on me from the ravine, which soon pulled me up. I saw I was in a fix and turned about to walk back, but the fire grew so hot that I had to run for it, the bullets swishing about me in grand style. Luckily I managed to reach one of our rifle pits, into which I thankfully dropped. The Brigade-Major, Captain Young, who had luckily seen the affair, advanced with some men, and I got back safe and sound. By this time the men had had their dinner, and I directed Van Straubenzee to take up our old positions at once and push on cautiously, while the rest of us had something to eat. Straubenzee moved off and extended two companies of the Midlanders on the left moving up to the cemetery. The 10th Grenadiers, under Lieutenant-Colonel Grasett, prolonged the line to the right beyond the church, the 90th being in support. The Midlanders, gallantly led, under their Colonel, swept on through the wood, driving the enemy out of the rifle-pits at the cemetery and between the cemetery and river. The 10th, under their gallant chief, Grasett, now advanced driving the enemy out of the ravine, the whole giving vent to a rattling cheer, which brought myself and staff speedily to the front, where I found the whole line, which had been splendidly led by Lieutenant-Colonel Van Straubenzee, in the wood facing the village, the line being perpendicular to the river; the Midlanders on the left, the Grenadiers in the centre, and the 90th on the right in column, commanded by Captain Buchan, Major Mackeand having sprained his leg early in the day, and Major Boswell being left in the zareba with a guard. The guns were now up and commenced firing from their old position on the village and on the ferry, by which some of the enemy were escaping. The 90th were now quickly extended on the right of the Grenadiers, the extreme right being taken by the scouts, dismounted. About this time Ashley again appeared, having run the gauntlet of the fire of both sides to bring another letter from Riel—who by the way, he said was in a blue funk—thanking me for my courteous reply, etc., but outside the envelope was written, “I don’t like war. If you don’t cease firing the question will remain the same as regards the prisoners.” Of course no answer was sent, and soon, with

the officers well to the front, a general advance of the whole line was made with rousing cheers, the place was captured, the prisoners released, and the fight was over, except for some desultory long-range firing, which was soon put down by two or three parties sent in different directions. About 6 p.m. the steamer Northcote appeared towing another steamer. We were all delighted to see them, and found that except two or three very slight casualties the Northcote people were all safe, but they had a long story to tell. I sent for our blankets and food, and bivouacked in and about the houses of the village, having, however, sent the scouts back to strengthen the guard I had left all day in the zareba under Lieutenant-Colonel Houghton, consisting of a party of the 90th, under Major Boswell, and a gun of A Battery. We posted our piquets, and were all glad to get to sleep after our successful day's work.²⁸

My article in last month's magazine concluded with the capture of Batoche, the rebel headquarters, on the 12th of May, 1885. Needless to say, I was well satisfied with the result of the day's fighting, which proved the correctness of my opinion that these great hunters, like the Boers in South Africa, are only formidable when you play their game, "bush fighting," to which they are accustomed, but they cannot stand a determined charge. This fact had been practically brought home to my men, and from that moment I felt that the dash requisite to fully utilize their pluck and coolness under fire would not be wanting. I could not, however, help regretting that I had deprived Lord Melgund of having the share of our final success which his previous good service with the force most justly entitled him to. Our casualties for that day amounted to five killed, of whom four were officers, viz., Captain French, Captain Browne, of Boulton's Scouts, Lieutenant Fitch, 10th Grenadiers, and Lieutenant Kippen, of Land Surveyor's Scouts, who had all died gallantly doing their duty, and whose loss was deeply deplored,—and twenty-five wounded, including two officers, Major Dawson, 10th Grenadiers, who had ably assisted his chief during the day, and Lieutenant Laidlaw, Midlanders. This made our total list of casualties, for the four days at Batoche up to

eight killed, of whom four were officers, and forty-six wounded, of whom four also were officers.

We found twenty-three dead rebels in the vicinity of the houses and cemetery, and five wounded. We afterwards received from one of the Roman Catholic Priests a report of the rebel loss during the four days' fighting, which amounted to fifty-one killed and 173 wounded, of which forty-seven were killed and 163 wounded on the last day, the 12th of May.

We found a large camp of women and children, natives and half-breeds, under a cliff on the river side, who had been left behind by their lords and masters, and who, of course, were in an awful fright, but were soon reassured by us. From them we learnt that Dumont and Riel had fled together as soon as they saw the day turning against them, and the further remarks of some of those ladies concerning those two gentlemen were, to put it mildly, the reverse of complimentary.

I sent out scouts at once to try and find out what they could about them, as from what I could learn, they had not crossed the river. On going over the ground we were astonished at the excellence of the construction of the rifle-pits, a good idea of which can be gained by reference to the sketch of one of them by Captain Haig, R.E., A.Q.M.G. We found blankets, trousers, coats, shirts, boots, shoes, food, oil, Indian articles of dress, a few rifles, and some damaged shot guns in and about these pits, with recesses made in the sides to keep their blankets, etc., from the rain. Detachments of the enemy had evidently lived day and night in these pits safe from our fire. They were most judiciously placed to repel an attack from the large plain, but by attacking their right we had turned their entrenchments, and thus avoided a heavy loss. One or two of the pits showed signs of a hurried attempt to reverse their defence. Riel told me afterwards that our two reconnaissances to the open plain had confirmed them in their idea that we intended attacking from that side, and that the main part of their force was consequently posted there the last two days. I sent off one of Boulton's Scouts to Humboldt with a telegram to the Minister of Militia, announcing our success, and the messenger returned during the night with a congratulatory answer. The next day brought

us telegrams of congratulation from the Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, and Lord Wolseley, then in Egypt, which were both published in general orders, to the great gratification of the whole force. The story of the steamer Northcote was as follows:— Having anchored about two miles above Batoche, she moved on at 7.40 a.m., and was soon after fired upon from both banks, the men on board returning the fire. Luckily, the man at the wheel was well covered, but the captain, pilot, and most of the crew lost their heads, and the boat swept on, the wire ferry rope carrying away her smoke-jack and the steam whistle. The enemy's fire was kept up for nearly two miles, but with little effect, only three men being slightly wounded. The steamer was then brought up, and finding it impossible to steam back with the two heavily-loaded barges she had in tow, it was reluctantly resolved to continue on to the Hudson Bay Ferry, repair damages, leave the barges there, take in more firewood, and return at once to Batoche. Unfortunately they were delayed some hours before reaching the ferry by running on a sandbank. They found the steamer Marquis at the Ferry, and a party of mounted police under Superintendent White, and it was determined to strengthen the steamer, put the police on board, and take them with the Northcote to Batoche.

The two steamers started on the morning of the 12th, but again the fates were against them, as the Marquis broke down and had to be towed by the other steamer, and they did not arrive at Batoche until 6 p.m.,²⁹ too late, to their intense regret, to share in our victory. Though the Northcote was unfortunately prevented from taking part in our attack on Batoche, I have little doubt that the probability of her returning with reinforcements tended to disturb the enemy, and Major Smith and his party deserved great credit for the resolute way in which they met the difficulties with which they were beset. Major Smith reported highly of the conduct of those with him, especially of my aide-de-Camp, Captain Wise, Derbyshire Regiment, who, in spite of his wound, persisted in taking up a position with a rifle in the most exposed part of the boat and joining in the defence.

May the 13th was devoted to sending the wounded to Saskatoon by steamer, and to getting ready to move off to Prince Albert.

A great number of half-breed came in, vigorously waving white flags, and gave themselves up with their arms. I had a list of the worst of the rebels, and those not in it I dismissed. I received news during the day that Riel and Dumont were certainly on our side of the river.

The next day May 14th, we marched for Lepine's Crossing, but during our midday halt I received reliable information that Riel was lurking in the neighbourhood, so I made for Guardepuis Crossing, which was close at hand, and camped for the night. The half-breeds continued to come in in great numbers with their white flags. The next morning, May 15th, we commenced crossing the river, using one of the steamers for that purpose. I sent Boulton off with nearly all our mounted scouts to scour the woods as far back as Batoche. While he was beating the covers, the principal game was driven into the hands of three of my courier scouts, Hourie, son of the interpreter, Deal, and Armstrong, all good men and true. They being well acquainted with the country, had detached themselves from Boulton's force, and came across Riel, who fearing to fall into the hands of the troops, gave himself quietly up to them and begged to be taken at once to me. He had in his possession a letter which I had sent out, at the request of Mr. Ashley, by a half-breed the day Batoche was taken. This letter guaranteed his life, if he surrendered, until handed over to the civil authorities. I sent off to recall Boulton, some of whose men it appeared had caught sight of Dumont, but he was too well mounted and got away from them. I may as well add here that Dumont eventually succeeded in making good his escape into the United States. As soon as Riel arrived in camp he was brought to my tent while one was being pitched for him next my own. I found him a mild spoken and mild looking man, with a short brown beard and an uneasy frightened look about his eyes, which gradually disappeared as I talked to him. He had no coat on, and looked cold and forlorn, and as it was still chilly out of the sun I commenced proceedings by giving him a military great coat of my own. He spoke English perfectly, and had a long talk with him. He told me that he had intended escaping to the United States with Gabriel Dumont, but finding troops all about in the woods, he had given up the

privations he would have had to undergo in trying to escape, not being accustomed to a hunter's life as Dumont was.

After conversing with Riel a good deal for two days, I came to the conclusion that he was sane enough in general every-day subjects, but he was imbued with a strong, morbid, religious feeling mingled with intense personal vanity.

After giving him some dinner I sent him off to his tent, and placed him under the personal charge of Captain Young, the Brigade-Major, who never let him out of his sight until he had handed him over to the Police Authorities at Regina, even sleeping under the same blankets with him. Whatever duty I assigned to Captain Young, I could always depend on his performing it thoroughly and well. Sentries were posted about Riel's tent, and he was very anxious that they should receive orders that none of the soldiers were to be allowed to enter his tent, as he was sure they wanted to kill him, though I assured him such was not the case. Lieutenant-Colonel Houghton left that day for Winnipeg, and I gladly appointed Major Smith, of C Company School Corps, to succeed him as Assistant Adjutant-General, and Captain Harston, of the 10th Grenadiers, to succeed Captain Young as Brigade-Major. Captain Harston had served in the Royal Marines, and was a most zealous, intelligent officer.

May 16th we were still engaged in crossing the troops, which was nearly completed by night, the second steamer having arrived from Saskatoon. Received news that day of the capture on the 14th of May, of a supply train of twenty-three teams with their teamsters, on the Swift Current trail, about fifteen miles from Battleford, by Poundmaker's Indians.³⁰ This was the only instance, during the whole campaign, of an attack being made on our trains. The same Indians, a few hours later, attacked and drove back a patrol of nine men of the Mounted Police, who had one man killed and one wounded. The next day, the 17th, was Sunday, and we had divine service as usual. The Rev. C. C. Whitcomb, Church of England, joined the 10th Grenadiers that day. We finished crossing the teams, which was a laborious work. The steamer Baroness arrived in the afternoon with supplies, from Swift Current, bringing also two more companies of Midlanders³¹ under Major Harry Smith.

Four rebels were brought in as prisoners, one of them having been Riel's Secretary. Large quantities of arms were brought in by half-breed, who, after being warned, were let go. The next morning, May 18th, the Northcote steamer was dispatched up the river with Riel, under charge of Captain Young, and some other prisoners, who now numbered twenty-four in all, en route for Regina, where they afterwards arrived safely. The other steamers went on to Prince Albert. I sent two teams loaded with flour, bacon, tea, etc., to the Roman Catholic priests at Batoche, to enable them to relieve any distress among the women and children that might arise. The column marched at 10 a.m., the day, though fine at first, turned to heavy showers in the afternoon. We did the thirty-five miles to Prince Albert in two days, arriving there early on the 19th, after an eighteen miles march, and we were met by the Bishop of Saskatchewan and Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine and a good many of the inhabitants, who presented me with an address. The Mounted Police looked smart and well, and were a fine body of men. The town, which is a straggling one, runs along the right bank of the North Branch of the Saskatchewan. It had been hastily and imperfectly put in a state of defence at different points, but as the ground about it was clear it must have been all along tolerably safe from attack, as half-breeds and Indians are not fond of attacking even slightly protected positions in open ground, and it was evidently not considered liable to attack from the river, no attempt having been made to protect that side of the houses. In point of fact there was no attempt at attack made by the enemy on Prince Albert, or its immediate neighbourhood, as the Bishop of Saskatchewan lived near a large school or college, which was situated a little distance from the town, and was not molested.

We remained at Prince Albert for three days, during which time I was busily engaged in receiving from, and dispatching telegrams to, my different detachments, and in making arrangements for going on to Battleford. On the 22nd of May I embarked my force in two steamers, except the mounted men and transport who I directed to march by the north trail, crossing the river at Fort Carlton. I took on with me from Prince Albert Mr. Hayter Reed, Assistant

Indian Commissioner, who was kindly lent to me by Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney, and whose knowledge of the country and Indians was of great assistance to me. To my great regret I was obliged to leave Captain Wise at Prince Albert, his wound not being healed.

The next day, the 23rd, as we were steaming on to Battleford, a canoe was seen to shoot out from the bank ahead of us. We slowed down, the canoe ran alongside, and an Indian, accompanied by a white man, boarded us. The Indian proved to be a messenger from Poundmaker; the white man—a Mr. Jefferson, an Indian instructor, who had been captured by the Indians—accompanying him as a sort of interpreter. The Indian handed me a letter written in English, which read as follows:—

“Eagle Hills, May 19th, 1885.

“SIR.—I am camped with my people at the east-end of the Eagle Hills, where I am met by the news of the surrender of Riel. No letter came with the news, so that I cannot tell how far it may be true. I send some of my men to you to learn the truth and the terms of peace, and hope you will deal kindly with them. I and my people wish you to send us the terms of peace in writing, so that we may be under no misunderstanding, from which so much trouble arises. We have twenty-one prisoners, whom we have tried to treat well in every respect.* With greetings,

His
“(Signed) POUNDMAKER X
Mark.

“To Major-General Middleton,
“Duck Lake.”

I sent back the following not quite grammatical answer:—

“POUNDMAKER.—I have utterly defeated the half-breeds and Indians at Batoche, and have made prisoners of Riel and most of his council. I have made no terms with them, neither will I make terms with you. I have men enough

*Mr. Jefferson informed me that the teamsters had been released before he started.

to destroy you and your people, or, at least to drive you away to starve, and will do so unless you bring in the teams you took and yourself and councillors, with your arms, to meet me at Battleford on Monday, the 26th. I am glad to hear you have treated the prisoners well and have released them.

“(Signed) FRED MIDDLETON,
“Major-General.”

Next day, the 24th, we arrived at Battleford, and were received by Lieutenant-Colonel Otter, commanding there. The principal part of this straggling town is situated between the Saskatchewan and the Battle rivers, but at some little distance from the former. The houses of the Judge and others, and a native college, were on the south side of the Battle, and that part only was molested by the Indians after it had been deserted, who burned and pillaged some of the houses the night of Lieutenant-Colonel Otter's arrival and halted some three or four miles short of Battleford. The other part was surrounded by fine, clear, open grassland, and was never attacked by the Indians at all, the goods left in the abandoned houses being found untouched on the arrival of Otter's force. The weakest spot in the whole settlement was the Police Barracks or stockade, which hastily and imperfectly strengthened, was situated in the vicinity of a large coulee, and there all the inhabitants were collected. As the 24th of May fell on a Sunday, the next day I had a parade³² of all the troops to celebrate Her Most Gracious Majesty's birthday. On the 26th, Poundmaker and his people came in about 1 p.m., and we held a “pow-wow” in front of the camp.³³ It was rather an interesting sight. The Indians, in war paint, to the number of about seventy, squatted themselves down in a semicircle in front of my chair, Poundmaker, a tall, fine-looking Indian, taking up his position between the Indians and myself, Houric, my interpreter, standing close to Poundmaker. Outside the semicircle were to be seen a few squaws, squalid and dirty as usual. Close round me, in a semicircle to match the squatting Indians, stood all my officers, the whole completely encircled by the men of my force.

Poundmaker opened the ball by making a long oration, embellished with allegories and the usual Indian flower of speech. The gist of it was that he knew little of what was going on, that he had done his best to keep his young braves quiet, and that now he had come to make his peace, which he seemed to think was very praiseworthy of him. Several braves followed him, but it was difficult to understand what they were driving at. At last a squaw came forward and wanted to make a speech, but I objected, saying that, like the Indians themselves, we did not admit women to our councils in war time, and that I could not listen to her. When this was translated to her, the dirty, but crafty old woman shrewdly remarked that we ourselves were ruled by a woman. In answer, I allowed that such was the case, but pointed out that our gracious Queen only spoke on war matters through her councillors, among whom were no women. The old lady did not seem to see it, and she was dragged away, grumbling loudly, by some of her friends. Poundmaker kept dignified silence during this little interlude. After the braves had all finished I made a short speech, in which I pointed out the ingratitude of the Indians, who had been well treated by the white men, in joining the half-breeds in rebellion, and that now, when they heard of the defeat and capture of Riel, they came in with lies in their mouths begging for peace. I then went on to say that, in obedience to orders from Government, I should arrest Poundmaker and four of his braves, bearing the curious names, when translated, of Lean-man, Yellow-mud-blanket, Breaking-through-the-ice, and White Bear, and that the rest could return to their reserve, first giving up the men who had committed two deliberate murders of white men a short time before. Upon this, a brave wearing a European woman's straw hat with ribbons, stepped out of the semicircle, and, sitting at my feet, which he grasped with his two hands, confessed to one of the murders. Strangely enough, this man's name, when translated, was "the man without blood." Another Indian now stepped out, and, stripping himself to the waist, advanced and confessed to having committed the other murder. I then declared the pow-wow at an end, and the prisoners were taken off by the mounted police, and eventually sent to Regina. The next

day, the 27th, the rest of my force arrived by steamer under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Van Straubenzee. A small party of mounted police under Major Perry,³⁴ arrived early in the morning from the Alberta Field Force, which he had left at Fort Pitt, where they had arrived on the 25th after great difficulties and arduous work under the command of Major-General Strange. This party had been sent down to the south bank to see if any information could be obtained of Big Bear's people, whom General Strange believed had started off to join Poundmaker. On finding that General Strange was at Fort Pitt, I at once sent off a steamer with supplies for his force, in charge of Captain Bedson, putting a company of the 90th, under Captain Forrest, on board, also Major Perry and his party. When nearly half-way to Fort Pitt, the steamer was boarded from a canoe by a messenger from General Strange with the account of an engagement with Big Bear's people, and Captain Bedson, very wisely, having landed the mounted police, returned at once to Battleford for further orders. It appeared that General Strange having received certain information, had marched from Fort Pitt late in the day on the 27th with all his available force, and came up with the enemy in a strong position on a wooded ridge, from which he drove them, and bivouacked there for the night. The next morning, the 28th, he followed up their trail and came upon them strongly posted, near a hill called "Frenchman's Butte," well covered by a swampy creek. After engaging the enemy for some time, and having three men wounded, it was reported by scouts that the creek was impracticable for his men to cross, so considering his force not strong enough to run any risks, General Strange determined to return to some open ground six miles to the rear, from whence, after a halt of two hours, he fell back to Fort Pitt about five miles distant.³⁵ It was a pity General Strange had not waited for my arrival, when a more decisive blow might have been struck. He reported favourably of his troops, specially mentioning the names of some of his officers, Brigade-Major Dale, late Madras Fusiliers, Major Steel, Mounted Police, Lieutenant Strange, now Royal Artillery, and others. I immediately issued orders for the whole of my column to be ready to leave next day, the 30th, for Fort Pitt,

by steamer, except the mounted part, which was to march by the trail on the south bank, Lieutenant-Colonel Otter and his column remaining at Battleford. Accordingly the next morning, May 31st, we left in three steamers. The day after, when within six or seven miles of Fort Pitt, Major Dale, Strange's brigade-major, came on board with the information that the Alberta Column had left Fort Pitt, and was then camped some twelve miles off on its way back to Frenchman's Butte. Major Dale also brought the very welcome intelligence that on his way to me he had come across the Rev. Mr. Quinney, his wife, and some half-breeds, who had escaped from Big Bear's camp in the confusion caused by the attack at Frenchman's Butte. Major Dale left with the escaped prisoners, and a message from me to General Strange that I would be with him next day. On the 2nd I landed, and with a small escort rode off to General Strange's camp, leaving orders for the troops to be disembarked and camped where they were. After a disagreeable ride we found Strange's camp pitched near Big Bear's late position, he having ascertained that morning that the Indians had abandoned it. Indeed, we afterwards heard that they had done so the day after the fight. I found Strange had sent Major Steele to follow the trail of Big Bear, who had apparently gone northwards. He had also sent Mr. McKay, Hudson Bay Company, with some scouts, by another trail, who afterwards came across a party of Indians with Mrs. Gowanlock, Mrs. Delany, and other prisoners who had been separated from Big Bear's party, and whom they took in to Fort Pitt.

We went over Big Bear's late camp, and found that the Indians had made numerous rifle-pits, but they were not all well placed, a good many of them being too far back on the plateau. The gully below was full of carts, broken and sound, harness, old bedding, blankets, cooking-pots, flour, bacon etc., most of it being loot. This abandonment, to them, of valuable property, showed that the Indians were getting demoralized. General Strange informed me that the trail taken by Major Steele was impassable for teams owing to the very bad muskegs, and he wished to take his force by Onion Lake towards Frog Lake. This I agreed to: but I did not believe that the trail was so difficult as was made out.³⁶

"Nor'-Westers" were still rife and I determined to follow Steele's trail myself. I returned to my camp by the river, and next morning, June 3rd, having directed Van Straubenzee to move our camp to Fort Pitt, I started back to Strange's camp with all the mounted men, viz., Boulton's, Herchmer's Mounted Police, the Surveyors' Scouts, and Brittlebank's* (late French's), about 225 in all, with Major Short, Captain Peters, Lieutenant Rivers, twenty-five artillerymen, one gatling, and 150 infantry, selected from each regiment, under command of Major Hughes³⁷ of the Midlanders, all carried in carts. We had a very hard march, and it rained all day. Found Strange waiting to see me, his force having left for Onion Lake.

At 2 a.m. next morning, I was awoke with the news that Major Steele had caught up with the rear of Big Bear's party crossing a ford, and had killed five of them, three of his own men being wounded. Strange started to catch up his force, and we started at day-break on Big Bear's trail after Major Steele. The first part of the road was terrible, owing to numerous muskegs, but everyone worked hard and we managed to get the gatling and the teams through, the latter being lightly loaded. On our march, at one of the enemy's halting places, we found a rough mound, which a half-breed scout, we had as interpreter, declared to be a grave. As there were fears that the Indians might kill some of their prisoners, I had given orders that the ground in the vicinity of our march should be well searched for graves, and that they should be all opened, and reclosed carefully if only Indians were found therein. This one was opened in my presence, and found to contain an Indian Chief, who had evidently been badly wounded by a piece of one of Strange's shells. The body was partially clothed and had an eerie look about, owing to both cheeks being painted red. It was replaced and covered over again. We found more carts here, some with food in them, and a great many furs hidden about,³⁸ some of which were presented to me by their finders. A silver mug was picked up here with an inscription on it "Presented by General Rosser to Katie Maclean" which I took charge of and afterwards returned to the young lady herself.

*Captain Brittlebank, a most excellent partisan officer, had, as second in command, succeeded poor French at his much lamented death.

We halted at a point some ten miles from Fort Pitt where the trail from there joined the one we had come by. I heard such awful accounts of the trail ahead that I set men to work to make travois* after the Indian fashion, and sent into Fort Pitt for some rough pack saddles that the indefatigable Bedson had prepared for an emergency. I also sent back my infantry, much to their regret, but I felt they would keep us back, and ordered the second gatling to join us under Lieutenant Rutherford, B. Battery. I sent for the other gatling more to console the mounted force for the loss of the infantry than for any advantage I expected to derive from it. Though the gatlings had been well and pluckily worked, they had proved unsuitable for the kind of fighting we were engaged in. At least our experience at Batoche taught us that the physical as well as the moral effect of the gatling on our enemy had been very slight. During the day three wounded mounted Police came in from Major Steele's party, which was camped about eight miles from us. I rode out to the camp and saw Major Steele. He reported that he had come up with what was apparently the rearguard of Big Bear's party, packing up camp. He attacked them, killing several, but the rest had escaped across a ford to an island, and having counted seventy-three camp fires at a camp he had passed, he did not think his party strong enough to follow them, and so had retired. He also reported that his horses were mostly played out, having had little to eat, and he spoke most highly of the conduct of his officers, Captain Oswald and Lieutenant Coryell, non-commissioned officers and men, especially praising the pluck and endurance of the three wounded men. That evening my aide-de-camp Captain Frere, informed me that Major Steele and his men were very anxious to turn back and go with us, to which I consented, sending back the most used up of his men and horses to Fort Pitt. I knew from General Strange that Major Steele and his men had been most useful to him, and they did excellent service with me, Major Steele proving himself to be a most zealous and

*A travois is made by fastening two long poles at one end, the other two ends dragging on the ground and being kept apart by two transverse sticks on which the load is put. This affair is dragged by a pony, dog or squaw as the case may be.

excellent officer. Ever since we had left Frenchman's Butte, our route had been through woods, the weather being very hot. The mosquitoes and flies were terrible; however we all bore it with Christian fortitude, an occasional big "D" excepted!

Steele's report of the road ahead was tolerably favourable, though he thought we might have some difficulty at the ford he had mentioned, so I determined to start with my teams, taking with us the travois and pack saddles in case we might want them. We left Travois Camp (as we called it) early next morning, June 6th, picked up Steele's party, and camped at 6 p.m. after a twenty-five mile march, still in the woods, mosquitoes and a large sort of cattle fly called "Bulldogs" *being fearfully troublesome. We had had considerable difficulty in getting our teams on, but had managed to do so. I sent on in advance the Surveyors' Scouts under Captain Dennis, with axes, and when they came to a bad part or a stream they bushed or bridged it, so that we were seldom delayed, the party doing their work admirably and skilfully. Believing now that Big Bear and his braves were thoroughly disorganised and might scatter or turn, I sent off orders, before leaving Travois Camp, to Lieutenant-Colonel Otter to leave part of his force at Battleford under command of Major Dawson, 10th Grenadiers, who had not quite recovered from his wound, and to take the rest across the river, move on to Jack-fish Lake, and patrol to the north-west or Squirrel Plain. I also directed Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine, at Prince Albert, to cross a mounted party at Carlton, and patrol towards Green Lake, so that with General Strange moving on Beaver River by Frog Lake, and my party moving northwards, it would be difficult for Big Bear to get away. I determined to leave our camp standing here with a small guard, and not take any tents on at all, as it would lighten our teams considerably; and marching at day-break, halted at mid-day near one of the enemy's old camps. We found several broken carts with food etc., and one of our scouts discovered hid under a large pile of boughs and leaves two carts full of furs, part of which was presented to me. There

*This pest takes a bit out of you with each bite, leaving a drop of blood trickling down your face or neck.

were more signs, as usual, of the presence of the prisoners in this camp, bits of torn photographs, lids of work-boxes, small pieces of coloured wools tied to branches of bushes etc. That evening after doing twenty-five miles we camped on the high ground, overlooking the lake and ford, where Steele had caught the enemy crossing. The lake was a large one, though not shown on our maps, and was known to the half-breeds as Loon Lake, there being numbers of these birds about it. I went down to the ford, passing through the old Indian camp where more things were left scattered about, with one Indian lying dead, shot through the body. We found the ford quite passable for our teams and gatlings, and next morning we marched early, crossed over safely, and found ourselves on the mainland and not on an island. On our way we passed another lake on our right, and on the ridge of land between the two lakes came across another Indian camping ground, with, as usual, furs, carts, food etc., lying about, and three graves which were found to contain three Indians. We found some scraps of paper here with writing on them, saying that the prisoners were all right. Our trail this day was very hilly and tried the draught horses terribly, and it was wonderful to see over what apparently impassable ground we brought our gatlings and teams in safety. The trail conducted us to what we called the "Narrows," being a rapid stream running from one lake to the other, and which the Indians had evidently crossed by means of rafts of wood and rushes. We at once set to work to make a raft to take over the saddles, blankets etc., and swam the horses over, leaving the teams, gatlings, and twenty-five mounted police on the hither side. We moved on and bivouacked on a wooded ridge, where there were evident signs that the Indians had camped within forty-eight hours. Just below where we halted we found the body of an Indian squaw in a kneeling position. She had a piece of raw-hide—"shakanappy" as it is called—round her neck, the ends being fastened to a young tree, and had deliberately strangled herself. We heard afterwards that she had some disease which prevented her walking, and her party having no means of carrying her on, the unfortunate woman committed suicide. Boulton, who had been sent forward, returned with the unpleasant news that the

trail of the Indians had entered a muskeg, which was the only way by which we could follow them to the north, not having boats, and that the muskeg would be quite impassable by us. I went forward to judge for myself. A few yards on in the muskeg lay a cart, sunk in over its wheels, and beyond it on the track taken by the Indians, were strewed bundles, pots, and things dropped by them to lighten their loads. I rode myself into the muskeg, but soon sank to my saddle girths and was extricated with great difficulty. We bivouacked where we were, the night being hot, rainy and "moskitoey." Next morning two scouts managed, with great difficulty, to cross the muskeg, nearly losing their horses returning. They reported the enemy's trail as going north, and assured me we could not cross without losing probably half our horses, and perhaps some men. With such probable consequences in view, and fearing the risk of placing such an obstacle between ourselves and our supplies, I determined to return to Fort Pitt, and from there to make my way to General Strange on the Beaver River. The next morning we crossed the Narrows again by a sort of light bridge of faggots and ropes, cleverly made under Captain Peters' direction, the horses being swum over, and after two days' fatiguing marching arrived at Fort Pitt on the 11th June. On the 13th I started with the mounted men for Beaver River. Marched thirty-five miles to Frog Lake and pitched camp close to that of the Midlanders under Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, whom I had ordered there to support Strange. The settlement had been completely destroyed, and the Midlanders had buried two or three bodies of white people they had found. The next day we made another march of thirty-five miles and camped near the Hudson Bay Post, being torn to pieces by mosquitoes and flies, though we were better equipped to meet these monsters than before, having gauze veils and linen gauntlets, part of the numerous articles kindly made and sent up to the force by the ladies of Toronto, Ottawa, and other parts of Canada, a great part of which however, unfortunately went astray or were stole. Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise, with the kindly thoughtfulness of her race, also had graciously sent out Dr. Boyd, with an extensive medical and surgical outfit, and a large sum of money for

distribution, and I received a most kind letter of congratulations on our success from the Marquess of Lorne. The next day, June 15th, after a short march of ten miles, we arrived at General Strange's camp at the Roman Catholic Mission on the Beaver River. We had a pow-wow with some Chippewyan Indians, who had been (unwillingly) with Big Bear, and had got away from him, bringing with them their missionary, a very good, worthy man. After some talk it was arranged that two of the Indians should be sent down the river to try and find out where Big Bear was. Captain E. Palliser arrived today to join General Strange's column, after a hard and adventurous journey down the river from Edmonton. On the 17th June, I started with my aide-de-camp, Captain Freere, and Mr. Hayter Reed for Cold Lake, about fifteen miles off, where Lieutenant-Colonel Osborne Smith had been sent with the Winnipeg Light Infantry. We had to swim our horses across the Beaver River, and found two or three nasty muskegs on the other side, and were more or less baited by mosquitoes and "bull-dogs," all the way. I found Osborne Smith had sent the Rev. Mr. McKay—one of our best scouts—off in a canoe with two Indians to try and gain information about Big Bear. This lake, which is a large one, is well called Cold Lake, as its water is icy cold, but it seems to agree with the white fish, pike and trout, which abound, and are of immense size and very good to eat. The next day Captain Bedson arrived with supplies and letters for us, and in the evening the two Indians came in with the news that the Macleans and the rest of the prisoners had been released and were travelling by Loon Lake to Fort Pitt. This was good news indeed and I gave orders for my mounted party to move off at daybreak, for Fort Pitt, and directed Major-General Strange to collect his force and join me there. Captain Bedson and myself started in a waggon next morning, the 19th June, at 3 a.m. for "the landing" on the North Saskatchewan River, a distance of fifty miles, which we did, over a bad and difficult road, in about twelve hours, capturing a small black bear cub on our way. At "the landing" we found a steamer, and in it reached Fort Pitt at 10 p.m., Captain Bedson starting at once with teams to meet the released prisoners at Loon Lake. Our camp was

pitched on the plateau overlooking the remains of Fort Pitt, which had been placed in a bad position as regards defence. On the 22nd June Captain Bedson arrived with the released prisoners all safe and well.

On the 26th, I received the news that Big Bear's band had broken up, so with Batoche captured, Riel and Poundmaker prisoners, Big Bear powerless and a fugitive, and all the prisoners released, I considered my work nearly done, and began to make arrangements for breaking up the force. By the 3rd July the last of the troops at Fort Pitt had embarked in the steamers, except the Winnipeg Light Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Osborn Smith, who were left behind to gather in arms and prisoners, perhaps Big Bear himself. On my way down the river, however, I had the satisfaction of receiving a report that Big Bear had given himself up on the 2nd July to a small detachment of mounted police at Carlton.³⁹ This actually completed the perfect success of our campaign, but our joy was damped by the untimely death of Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, M.P., commanding the Midlanders. He died on board the steamer from the effects of a chill. His loss was universally deplored, not only by us, his comrades, but by the whole of Canada. I cannot better conclude this narrative than by quoting the General Order with which I took leave of my force:—

“In thus completing the breaking-up of the North-West Field Force, which has been under the immediate command of Major-General Middleton during the late campaign, he cannot let the officers and men comprising it separate without expressing his great satisfaction with them. During the whole time he has not had to assemble one court-martial; and, in fact, there had been almost total absence of crime. The troops have had great hardships to undergo, and real difficulties to overcome, and have borne and met them like men, with ready cheerfulness and without complaint. They, as untried volunteer-soldiers, have had to move in a country where an extraordinary scare existed, and against an enemy with whom it was openly prophesied they would be unable to cope, unless with great superiority of numbers. The scare they disregarded, as shown by the fact that during the whole three months not more than two or three false alarms took

place in camp, and the prophecy they falsified by beating back the enemy with a fighting line only equal if not inferior to him in numbers. Each regiment, corps, or arm of the service had vied one against the other, and each has equally well done its duty; not forgetting the transport service, which under its two able officers has so well aided our movements, the medical department which has been so efficiently directed, and the chaplains who have so carefully and assiduously ministered to our spiritual comforts. The Major-General in taking farewell of his old comrades begs to wish them all happiness and success in their several walks in life, and to sincerely thank them, one and all, for having by their gallantry, good conduct, and hard work, enabled him to carry to a successful conclusion what will probably be his last campaign."

FRED MIDDLETON

NOTES

1. Fighting began at Duck Lake on March 26, and ended with the capture of Big Bear on July 2. Most of the troops were home and dismissed by the end of July.
2. The expedition led by Wolseley was despatched by the Dominion government to restore the authority of the Manitoba government which Riel had usurped. No railway facilities whatever being available in 1870, it proceeded by the very difficult Dawson route with portages from Lake Superior overland to the chain of rivers and lakes leading into Lake Winnipeg, then up the Red River to Fort Garry, of which Riel had taken possession. The expedition was composed of British regular troops and Canadian volunteer militiamen. On its arrival, Riel, conscious that his conduct in the formation of a provisional government would not stand investigation, faded away across the border into the United States. Had he remained to assist in a review of the whole Manitoba situation by the Dominion authorities, and presented the undoubted grievances of the French halfbreed settlers on the Red River, is it fantastic to imagine that a second revolt on the Saskatchewan fifteen years later might never have taken place? The thrilling story of Wolseley's expedition of 1870 is told by himself in his autobiography, *The Story of a Soldier's Life* (London, 1903).
3. Middleton arrived in Winnipeg the day after the disastrous fight at Duck Lake. That he had already been despatched from Ottawa three days before this first armed outbreak, is proof that the government was finally convinced of the seriousness of the situation.
4. Should be *twelve*.
5. Fort Carlton on the North Saskatchewan was threatened by Riel, who had demanded its surrender. A force of Mounted Police and volunteers, about 100 in all, which moved out from there on March 26 to secure some stores and forage belonging to a settler at Duck Lake, about half way between Carlton and Batoche, was attacked and defeated by a strong force of halfbreeds under Riel and Dumont. Three of the Police and nine of the volunteers were killed. As a result, the Dominion government at once called out troops to suppress the rebellion now openly begun. Saint Antoine de Batoche, Riel's headquarters, is a village on the right bank of the South Saskatchewan, above the junction of the two branches.
6. The 100th Regiment was recruited in Canada in 1858 for the imperial service. To encourage recruiting, a lieutenancy was offered to anyone who could contribute forty men to the strength. Boulton could not qualify on account of his age, being only a youth of sixteen, fresh from Upper Canada College. Nothing daunted, he went on with recruiting in the Cobourg-Peterborough-Lindsay district, succeeded in raising the forty men, was eventually taken on the strength of the regiment as ensign, and saw service overseas, falling in with Middleton at Gibraltar in 1860. Major Boulton in 1886 published his *Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions*, a very valuable first-hand record, particularly for the years 1869-70, when he narrowly escaped death at the hands of Riel. In his book Boulton gives also a full account of the raising and the overseas service of the 100th Regiment. Shell River, where Boulton was settled with his family in 1885, is a branch of the Assiniboine, some 200 miles northwest of Winnipeg.

7. The unlawful execution of Thomas Scott by Riel's "provisional government" in 1870 was followed by the despatch of the military expedition under Colonel Wolseley, which ejected Riel from Fort Garry and allowed the re-establishment of law and order.

8. The name Troy was changed by the C.P.R. to Qu'Appelle on December 10, 1882.

9. Perhaps the chief indictment of Riel lies in the efforts he had long been making to win over the Indian tribes to assist him; for once on the war-path, they were quite beyond his control. He had marked success with the two main Cree chiefs, Big Bear and Poundmaker, as well as with other minor tribes who committed depredations along the Saskatchewan as far as Edmonton and southward toward Calgary, creating serious embarrassment for General Strange's Column. A general Indian uprising—and a resultant wholesale massacre of white settlements in the Northwest Territories—was fortunately avoided through the refusal of the most powerful of the Indian tribes, the Blackfeet, who lived in the Calgary district, to join him. Riel's emissaries were busily at work among them until the eve of the rebellion. The Blackfoot Chief Crowfoot was a far-seeing statesman, and remained loyal to the government. His personal friendship with General Strange who had an extensive ranch nearby, and who was asked to take command of the column operating farthest west, may have counted for something in the crisis.

10. William Dillon Otter (1843-1929) entered the volunteer militia in 1861, served as adjutant of the Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto in the Fenian raid of 1866, and became lieutenant-colonel and commander of the Queen's Own Rifles in 1874. When the permanent militia was organized in 1883, Otter entered it as a commander of the Infantry School Corps at Toronto. After reaching the scene of action in the west in 1885 in command of a considerable force from Toronto, he was assigned the task of relieving Battleford. In 1899 Otter commanded the first contingent of Canadian troops sent to South Africa. In 1908-10 he was chief of the general staff at Ottawa with the rank of brigadier general, in 1910-12 inspector general, and in 1914-18 director of internment operations in Canada. His distinguished services were recognized with the conferring of the K.C.B. upon him in 1913.

11. Thomas Bland Strange (1831-1925) was educated for the artillery at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. After serving in the Indian Mutiny he was appointed in 1871 inspector of artillery in Canada, and instructed in artillery at Quebec and the Royal Military College, Kingston. In 1882 he was placed on the reserve of officers, with rank of major general. General Strange had taken up ranching in the Calgary district, and when the rebellion broke out in 1885 he was asked to organize and command the Alberta Field Force, to operate to Edmonton and down the North Saskatchewan against Big Bear about Fort Pitt. In 1894 he published his autobiography under the title *Gunner Jingo's Jubilee*, which includes a graphic account of the operations of the column which he commanded in 1885.

12. General Middleton's apology for not using the cavalry may rest on superficially good theory, but it is not convincing. The implication that the mounted troops that he did allow up to the front—the Land Surveyors' Scouts and others—all rode prairie-tested horses will hardly stand. Indeed, it is plain

that the presence of all the cavalry he could muster would have been of great, perhaps decisive service at Fish Creek, and again at Batoche. His stalling of the cavalry at posts on his line of communications was something new in military tactics. The Governor-General's Bodyguard planted at Humboldt, and the Quebec Cavalry School Corps in the Touchwood Hills, were not doing what they might have done. Colonel G. T. Denison, commanding the G.G.B.G., who had a brilliant international reputation as the author of books on cavalry, hotly resented the action of Middleton. Possibly the fact that Colonel Denison had been definitely at odds with both of Middleton's predecessors in the command of the Canadian Militia had something to do with the General's wish not to have another big toad in the puddle beside himself.

13. Hayter Reed was assistant Indian commissioner and not the governor's secretary.

14. That Middleton and Melgund each chose one of these "men of good birth" for his orderly officer was not contributing to harmonious co-operation between the regulars and the Canadian militia.

15. Qu'Appelle. Pauline Johnson, herself of Indian blood, has made the legend regarding the name the subject of one of her poems.

16. Lord Melgund, later Earl of Minto (1845-1914). Before becoming General Middleton's chief-of-staff, Lord Melgund had been attached to the Turkish army in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877, and served in the Afghan campaign of 1882. From 1883 to 1886 he was military secretary to the Marquis of Lansdowne at Ottawa, from 1898 to 1904, as Earl of Minto, he was governor-general of Canada, and from 1905 to 1910 viceroy of India.

17. This Henty is not the well-known war correspondent of the *Standard*, and writer of stories for boys, but his son, G. A. Henty, Jr. The only one of his despatches that I have read is that on the capture of Batoche; it is entirely inadequate and juvenile.

18. Middleton's statement that most of the men in the Canadian militia were in the habit of having daily stimulants is probably an exaggeration, an inference from Old Country tradition. Colonel Denison found it more difficult to control the officers than the men in this respect.

19. Middleton is in error here. No Hudson's Bay official was killed in the Frog Lake Massacre. Mr. W. B. Cameron, who was in the employ of the Company, was the only white man to escape death. In his *War Trail of Big Bear* he has told of his experience as a prisoner with Big Bear's band.

20. This is one of General Middleton's sweeping generalizations made without taking pains to verify his facts, and is in this case just the reverse of true. In Otter's Column the infantry were not carried in wagons; from Swift Current to Battleford they marched on foot the whole way—except, of course, when ferried by steamer across the South Saskatchewan. Their heavy knapsacks and blankets were carried in the wagons as was the case in the other columns as well. The Battleford trail was on the whole good. The occasional bad stretches told more against the teams with their heavy loads than the men on foot. Marching hours were long and the pace fast, but it was not impossible for good marchers to keep up with the best that the long train of the column as a whole could do. The most trying part was the cold of the first nights, and the delay in getting ferried across the river.

21. Major-General Laurie took over the command at Swift Current on the day (April 13) on which Otter's column started from that point for Battleford.

22. The General seems to be a couple of days out in his reference to Dickens. According to the day-by-day entries in the diary of Corporal R. B. Sleigh, who was one of the party, they got across the river from Fort Pitt on April 15, started down next day, and reached Battleford at 9 A.M. on the 22nd. Captain Francis Jeffrey Dickens was the third son of Charles Dickens. After nine years of army service in India he was invalided home. For a change of climate he was gazetted to the North West Mounted Police in 1875, the year after the establishment of the Force, and had thus been with it for ten years when the Riel Rebellion broke out. At that time he was forty-one years of age. He resigned his commission in March, 1886, and died suddenly two months later when on a visit in Moline, Illinois.

23. It is rather strange that Middleton left standing in his account here the pronouncement that the bugle-note signalling was a "Perfect success" in view of his having to say later: "We were unfortunately unable to use our bugle signalling, as I could spare neither Captain Peters nor a bugler" (p. 48).

24. That "somebody on our side" (obviously not on orders from the General) was "gesticulating and shouting" for Melgund to come over to help, is good evidence that things were not going well. Bugle signalling not functioning, the scow useless!—all goes to show how foolish Middleton was in trusting to the uncontrollable cooperation across the wide and swift Saskatchewan in April. If "the affair was virtually over" when two more companies of the Grenadiers did get across, it was not over as it should have been.

25. These two companies ("A" and "C") of the Midlanders under their commander Colonel Williams took a prominent part in the fighting at Batoche.

26. The Cutknife Fight was the hottest action of the whole campaign; and though Otter brought it on without the General's orders, it is pleasing to read Middleton's complimentary remarks on Otter's generalship. Given the situation in which he found himself at the very beginning, Otter's handling of his troops throughout the six hours of intense fighting, and in the difficult withdrawal under fire, deserves all the praise here given to him. Imperfect intelligence work beforehand led Otter sadly to under-estimate the strength of the enemy; and poor reconnoitring by the Scouts and Mounted Police on the morning of the engagement allowed his force to advance, unaware of the proximity of the enemy, into an extremely perilous position. The estimate of the enemy strength at 200, here strangely repeated by Middleton, was the information which Otter mistakenly relied on as he left Battleford for Poundmaker's reserve. This was a sad mistake. In his report to the commander-in-chief he has to put it at "fully five hundred fighting men, including some fifty half-breeds." It was naturally impossible in the circumstances at the time to get the exact figure; but the new estimate forced upon Otter by the extent of the front with which he was almost surrounded during the action, is doubtless nearly correct. Father Cochin, a Roman Catholic priest on Poundmaker's reserve, who was present at the Cutknife Fight, told Lieutenant Cassels of the Queen's Own Rifles (who took part in it) that "Poundmaker had with him in the fight three hundred and eighty braves and about forty half-breeds." A fair final comment seems to be: Otter should have got reliable information as to what to expect; his scouting that morning should have been much more cautious; his handling of a serious situation was masterly, and the conduct of his men in action worthy of all praise.

27. When Lieutenant-Colonel Houghton, General Middleton's second-in-command, read this statement in the *United Service Magazine*, he published an indignant protest and denial of its veracity in the *Montreal Gazette* of Feb. 3, 1894. Colonel Houghton asserted that, in spite of a vigorous protest from himself, Middleton had at the close of the first day's fighting at Batoche ordered a retreat of his whole force, and that, some fifteen minutes after it had got under way, he was compelled to countermand the order because Dr. Orton, the brigade surgeon, positively refused to allow the wounded men in his charge to be moved back under such conditions. Interviewed by the correspondent of the *Toronto Telegram* in England who showed him Houghton's letter, Middleton flatly denied the truth of the charges, and in the course of his comments expressed surprise that some of the other officers had not chivalrously come to the aid of their commander in the controversy. After an interval in which no such aid was offered, Colonel Houghton returned to the attack with a still more vehement letter to the *Gazette* on March 31, in which he reviewed the situation in great detail, and ended by simply leaving it to the public to judge between General Middleton and himself as to veracity.

It is impossible now to sift the evidence completely and come to a satisfactory final conviction on the matter here under dispute. A few days after the capture of Batoche Colonel Houghton, in passing through Humboldt, unloaded his mind freely to Colonel Denison, who on the basis of this and his own collecting of evidence from participants in the action made a careful analysis of the operations about Batoche, and in particular with regard to Colonel Williams's forcing of the action, without Middleton's orders, at the final capture of the place. Whether we agree with all Colonel Denison's findings or not, they reveal what is clear from other evidence—that there was throughout the campaign an unfortunate but wide-spread lack of enthusiasm for their commander among the Canadian militia officers.

28. The account of the fighting at Batoche which General Middleton gives here differs in many details from that in his official despatches at the time.

29. Major Smith says: "about 8 p.m.," and ends his report on the thrilling experience of the steamer Northcote with this significant explanation of his difficulties: "Our weakness lay in the fact that the master, pilot and engineer were aliens, and that the crew were civil employees and not enlisted men." Dependence upon untrustworthy "aliens" may have been a weakness in operations elsewhere also during the campaign.

30. While he records the capture of this large train by Poundmaker's Indians, and notes that it was the only such instance of the whole campaign, the General might have had the grace to place the blame where it belonged—on the shoulders of Major-General Laurie, whom he had, just a month before, placed in charge of his base at Swift Current, from which point the train started for Battleford. Laurie should never have allowed it to move into such an exposed region without a very strong escort.

31. The Midland battalion reached the front in sections. Colonel Williams with two companies ("A" and "C") joined Middleton's column below Fish Creek on May 5, and took a leading part in the final charge and capture of Batoche on the 12th. "B" and "D" companies arrived next day. With the arrival of "E" and "F" companies on May 17, here referred to by Middleton, Colonel Williams

had six of his eight companies together for the subsequent operations with Middleton's column from Batoche *via* Prince Albert and Battleford up the river to Fort Pitt. The remaining two companies of the Midlanders ("G" and "H"), detained for duty at the Swift Current base, finally joined the battalion on June 18 at Frog Lake.

32. The parade included the firing of a *feu-de-joie*. To make the fire run smoothly down a long line of troops is not an easy operation, and that of May 25 at Battleford, unrehearsed as it had to be, was a trifle jerky. But it was none the less a hearty tribute of loyalty to Her Majesty, and would be sufficiently edifying to Poundmaker's scouts, who no doubt viewed the scene from a respectful distance beyond the Battle River. Poundmaker came in and surrendered next day, as suggested by General Middleton in his letter given above.

33. This historic scene, the surrender of Poundmaker to General Middleton at Battleford on May 26, is beautifully preserved in the painting by Major Rutherford, now in the Public Archives in Ottawa.

34. General Strange had reached Fort Pitt, but had not yet established communications with General Middleton. Knowing nothing of the surrender of Poundmaker that very day, Strange had sent Captain Perry with a party of twenty Mounted Police to reconnoitre for Big Bear, with instructions to return at once with any information he might get. To quote from General Strange: "Unfortunately, Captain Perry took it upon himself to ride into Battleford [90 miles] with his whole detachment without sending me any information, and I neither saw nor heard anything of him for nine days. . . . Possibly he had some vision of 'Kudos' for opening communication with General Middleton. . . . As it was, Captain Perry's absence deprived me of my Horse Artillery detachment for the 9-pounder gun at Frenchman's Butte." Captain Perry and his party returned eventually by steamer with supplies sent by Middleton for General Strange's Force.

35. General Strange's attack had forced Big Bear to retire from Frenchman's Butte, though he did not learn until later of his success.

36. As the commander-in-chief is so often sure that his own opinion is best regarding the operations in pursuit of Big Bear after his junction with General Strange, it is well to read the latter's account for comparison.

37. Major John Hughes of the Midland Battalion was a brother of General Sir Sam Hughes.

38. On the whole question of the furs, which was so venomously brought up in parliament by Middleton's enemies, we must in fairness read not only Hansard but the report of the Royal Commission on the subject, and what the General himself says in his "Parting Address."

39. Despairing of success in his attempt to reach the American boundary, Big Bear voluntarily gave himself up to a single policeman, Sergeant Smart.

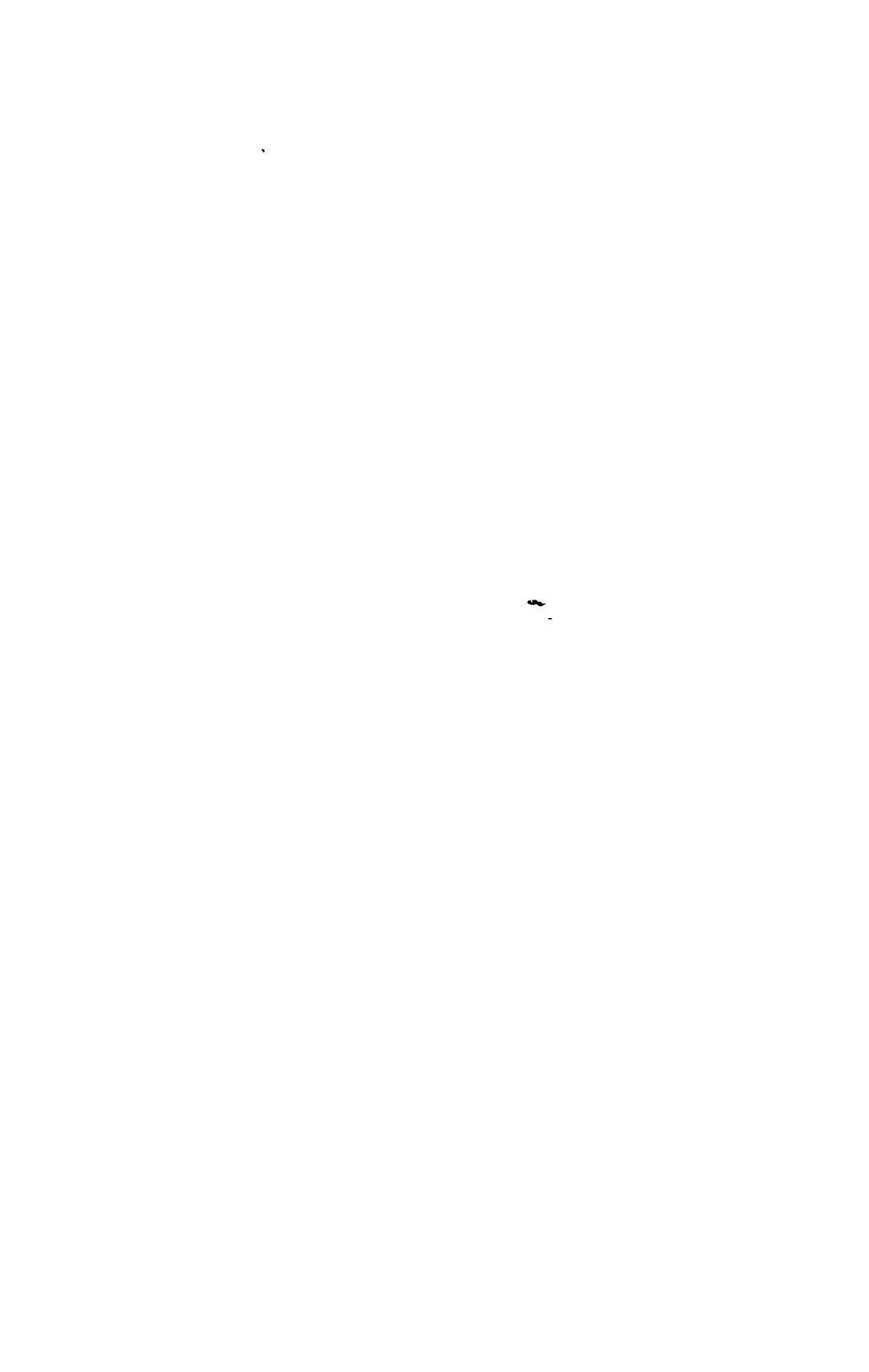
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

A NUMBER of books have been found particularly useful in preparing the introduction and notes to the present volume. The official account of the insurrection made by the minister of militia and defence to the governor-general is the *Report upon the Suppression of the Rebellion in the North-West Territories, and Matters in Connection Therewith, in 1885* (Ottawa, 1886). *The Birth of Western-Canada* (London, 1936) by G. F. G. Stanley is a scholarly, fully documented, and up-to-date treatment of the two Riel Rebellions.

There are in addition a number of accounts by participants. *Gunner Jingo's Jubilee* (London, 1894) by General T. B. Strange gives a graphic description of the operations of the Alberta Field Force which was under his command. *Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions* (Toronto, 1886) by Major Charles A. Boulton contains valuable first-hand information about the rebellions of 1870 and 1885, in both of which Major Boulton played an important part. Lieutenant Colonel George T. Denison, the commander of the governor-general's body guard, describes, in *Soldiering in Canada* (Toronto, 1900), his experiences in the campaign of 1885, including pungent criticism of Middleton's conduct of operations. Mr. W. B. Cameron, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company and the only white man to escape the Frog Lake massacre, has written *The War Trail of Big Bear* (Toronto, 1926), containing an account of his experiences as a prisoner in Big Bear's camp along with other pertinent information on events preceding and following the rebellion. *I Remember* (Toronto, 1946), by Major General W. A. Griesbach contains a valuable description of the Duck Lake fight by a participant. Mrs. Gowanlock and Mrs. Delaney, wives of two of the men murdered at Frog Lake, each wrote accounts of their experiences as prisoners in Big Bear's camp, which were printed in Toronto shortly after. Louis Riel's verses entitled *Poésies religieuses et politiques* (Montreal, 1886) which were published by his friends after his execution, give a most valuable insight into the mind and character of the leading actor in the scene.

Three unpublished diaries have also been kindly made accessible to the author. "Reminiscences of a Pioneer in Saskatchewan" by James Clinkskill contains valuable first-hand information on events

at Battleford where Mr. Clinkskill was a merchant and a victim of pillage. This diary is in the possession of his daughter in Regina. A diary by Lieutenant J. A. V. Preston, of Orangeville, Ont., deals with his experiences in the Midland battalion. That by Lieutenant R. S. Cassels of the Queen's Own Rifles, deposited in the library of the Canadian Military Institute, Toronto, gives a frank account of the Cutknife fight.



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MIDDLETON FRED SIR 1825-1898
SUPPRESSION OF THE REBELLION
IN THE NORTH WEST TERRITORIES
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